



Baptism as Inclusive Protest

Medina United Church of Christ, Congregational



January 10, 2021 - One Service Only – 10:00 a.m. Live Stream

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL

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

www.uccmedina.org

LIVE STREAMING OF THE SANCTUARY SERVICE IS AVAILABLE AT UCCMEDINA.ORG

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

RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL

PRELUDE “Waters of New Life” – Kevin Keil

Cathy Fafrak, Organist

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE PEACE

VISIONING PRAYER

by Sharon Alberson

God, help us to be welcoming. God, help us to be loving.

God, help us to see that serving you can lead us to

A place full of grace with no limits where we can be free...

To open our hands, welcoming. To open our hearts, loving.

To be more than church on Sunday, to live in the light from above;

To celebrate in service and love.

CALL TO WORSHIP (written by Caela Wood, Pastor at the First Congregational United Church of Christ, Manhattan, Kansas.)

Leader: The heavens open. The Spirit descends.

People: Jesus emerges from the water.

Leader: And a voice echoes through the blue expanse.

People: "This is my child, the Beloved, with whom I am well-pleased."

Leader: Jesus is named. Claimed.

People: We come to the water. We remember we are named. Claimed.

Leader: Can it be so? What a thing to be named. Claimed.

People: Let us worship the one who names and claims us still.

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Baptized in Water”

– Gaelic tune, words by Michael Saward © 1982

Alice Metzloff, soloist

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Stacie Yates

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

Recognition of Karen Brocco-Kish - completion of the Northeast Ohio School of Ministry Program

Introduction

Responsive Prayer

Leader: There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them.

People: There are different ways of serving, but the same God is served.

Leader: There are different abilities to perform service,
but the same God gives ability to each of us for our particular service.

People: The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.

Leader: Christ is like a single body, which has many parts.

People: It is still one body even though it is made up of different parts.

Leader: If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it;
if one part is praised; all the other parts share its happiness.

People: All of us are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it.

Education, Accreditation & Mission

Prayer

Loving God,

We acknowledge that you have given each of these persons the mind to pursue you through the gift of knowledge. Karen's achievements bring honor to you.

You have called these people to serve you in this community of faith and in the world, which you have entrusted to our care.

Send your Holy Spirit upon Karen that she may serve among us with honor and faithfulness.

May she be an example of discipleship to all that she meets, and may she inspire us to fulfill our calling in service to you. Amen.

HYMN

"We Are Marching in the Light of God"

This South African song and fourteen others were first recorded and published in 1980 by the Church of Sweden Mission and the singing group "Fjedur" after a visit they made to South Africa. The subsequent 1984 collection Freedom Is Coming brought the songs to a worldwide audience.

Tune: SIYAHAMBA Irr.
South African song

We are march - ing in the light of God, we are

march-ing in the light of God. We are march-ing in the

light of God. We are march-ing,

march-ing, we are

march-ing, Oo, march-ing, we are march-ing in the light of God.

SERMON "Baptism as Inclusive Protest"

Rev. Luke Lindon

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

Offering Invitation

Thank you for continuing to financially support the work and mission of the church! You can give in many ways of your time, talent and treasure. You can send your offering via mail or online at uccmedina.org/give. You can also give of your time and talent of writing and calling one another to strengthen the ties that bind. Let us now sing the doxology to our God, from whom all blessings flow.

Doxology (Thomas Ken, 1674; adapted)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ all creatures here below;
Praise Holy Spirit, Comforter: One God, triune, whom we adore. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

Holy One, we offer you ourselves. Our time. Our talent. Our treasure. We commit to what was promised at our baptisms. To love and serve you. To resist evil. To witness to your work and mission in the world. To be the church. Thank you, o God, our strength and our redemption. We pray all of this in the name of Jesus our Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. Amen.

BENEDICTION (posted on Third Space. <http://third-space.org.uk/>)

Leader: May the blessing of the three-in-one God be yours.

Leader: May the Spirit bless you with hope

People: poured out like water and flowing as the river.

Leader: May Jesus bless you with discomfort

People: at injustice and oppression.

Leader: May the Creator who holds the Earth

People: as an artist holds brush and palette

Leader: fill your imagination

People: so that you always find the world inspiring and wonderful.

Leader: May God in whose being beauty shines on you

People: journey with you.

Leader: God says to you,

People: "you are my beloved, Be blessed this day and always."

Leader: Having been blessed, go be that 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 "Onward, Christian Soldiers" – arr. Christina Becket

Cathy Fafrak, Organist

MORE THAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY"

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PASTORAL STAFF

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Jim Kiser, Director of Music

Cathy Fafrak, Organist

Rebecca Rosen, Nursery Supervisor

Jennifer Vilimonovic, Director of Hobby Horse Preschool

Laura Garcia, Assistant Director of Hobby Horse Preschool

Jack Sharpe, Maintenance

Jack Manhoff, Custodian

THE PILGRIM MESSENGER

JANUARY 10, 2021

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

January 10, 2021 thru January 17, 2021

WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sun 10:00 am Online worship only

Mon

Tues

Wed 7:00 pm Worship Team Zoom Mtg.

Thurs

Fri

Sat

Sun 10:00 am Online worship only

Worship Highlights: 10:00 am Live Stream Only

Scripture: Mark 1: 4-11

Sermon: “Baptism as Inclusive Protest”
Rev. Luke Lindon

Altar Flowers: The flowers are given by Pat Hofstetter in memory of Jack Hofstetter.

UPPER ROOMS AVAILABLE

New Upper Room daily devotionals for January/February are in! Pick up a regular or large print format on the table in the Welcome Area.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Yes... it's Annual Report time again! If Cindy has asked for an annual report from you, the **deadline is Wednesday, January 6th**.

This means we would like an annual report from the following:

Endowment Committee, Stewardship Team, Finance Team, Treasurer and Church Clerk.

When completed, please email them to her at: office@uccmedina.org or drop them off in the church office. Thank you!

FORECASTING 2021

In order to best forecast 2021 budgets the church is still in need of at least 38 more pledges. Thank you to the 141 people who have already turned in their pledge cards for 2021! Blank cards are available on the table in the Welcome Area or on the website. Click on “Give Online Here” and download your own copy.

NEW MEMBER CLASSES

Would you like to join our church family!? Join us for our next virtual new member class! The next class will be held: **Monday, February 1st**. **Class will be held through a zoom call beginning at 7 pm.** New members will join the church on **Sunday, February 14th**. Please contact the Church Office at 330-725-4559 or office@uccmedina.org if you are interested.

OFFERING ENVELOPES

If you requested offering envelopes, they are now available on the table in the New Library. If you have not yet turned in a pledge card, please consider doing so as soon as possible. Thank you!

BLANKET SUNDAY 1/24/21

Have you ever been through a big storm? The kind where you're glued to the weather channel, getting that terrifying text alert or hearing community sirens as you strategize the safest place in your house? Families in western Ohio experienced that gripping fear when 15 tornadoes touched down overnight. And after the tornadoes finally let up, neighbors stepped out to a world that was broken. The destruction left a traumatic mark; even now, many families haven't been able to move back into their homes. But they aren't alone, and they aren't forgotten. Your gift to CWS Blankets today proves it, as did the gifts of thousands like you last year. In a matter of days, they were distributing blankets and supplies to those who lost everything. It signaled to a hurting community that someone cared about them. That Christ's love comforts and heals. That we find light together in our darkest times. Will you give generously to CWS Blankets on January 24th to set that in motion for future needs? You'll signal your love to families who are desperate for a healing embrace.

FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY

Living the life of your dreams starts with a solid financial plan. Join our virtual *Financial Peace University class* and learn to dump debt and build wealth. You won't even have to leave home. Visit fpu.com/1127951 to sign up for our class and start your 14-day free trial of Financial Peace. Class starts **Thursday, January 21, 2021.**

GIFT CARD ORDERS

Plan ahead now for Special Occasions and place your Gift Card order soon. Please see the Yellow Retailer List in the rack near Fellowship Hall or visit www.glscip.com and click on the Retailer List on the left side to view or print your own list. Complete a Green Order Form, also available in the rack near Fellowship Hall and return to Kelly or Stacie with payment.

Due to the office being closed for MLK, Jr. Day, the next order will be a day later and due on Tuesday, January 19th at 10:00 am.

FIDGET BLANKETS OF LOVE MINISTRY NEEDS HELP!

Spring cleaning early? Reorganizing? Discarding "stuff", and you don't know what to do with it? ***How about donating to the Circle of Caring FIDGET BLANKETS OF LOVE MINISTRY!*** Circle of Caring is asking our Congregation-at-large for help in the collection of supplies of all styles and varieties with ACTION, TEXTURE, and DECOR.

ITEMS need to be safe-to-handle, NON-TOXIC, NON-SHARP EDGED, NON-POINTY...with safe size specific dimensions:

WIDTH = 1"- 3". LENGTH = 1"- 5".

Fidget Blankets focus on three aspects of stimulation and activity:

ACTION FEATURES with motion and sounds:
Action baubles that slide, buckle, tie, zip, etc. Sounds such as jingly, tinkly, crunchy, whooshing, shushing, etc.

TEXTURE FEATURES TO TOUCH/FEEL:
fabrics with distinct textures like ribbed, bumpy, fuzzy, furry, raised patterns, etc. Examples include chenille, upholstery, fleece, faux fur, "popcorn", crinoline, satin, felt, etc.

DECORATIVE FEATURES THAT CATCH THE EYE: shiny, glitzy trimmings in all colors, such as sequins, lace, rick-rack, hem tape, curtain edgings, edge trim, seam binding, ribbon, etc.

Please bring donations to the church in a closed plastic bag marked "FBOLM" and place in the crates under the stairs in the Welcome Area. Look for details in the upcoming Pilgrim Messengers about how the congregation can continue to help.

Interested in a Fidget Blanket for a loved one?

Contact the church office and leave a message for our Visitation Pastor, Karen Brocco-Kish.

For questions and inquiries about Fidget Blankets, contact Alice Metzloff at 330-242-3602 or iamalsblugown@gmail.com. **THANK YOU ONE AND ALL!**

HOBBY HORSE PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION for 2021-2022

Our church owned preschool will begin Registration for the 2021-2022 school year on Monday, January 25, 2021. You may review our curriculum, classes offered and fees by visiting our website at hobbyhorsepreschool.org. If you are interested in scheduling a tour or receiving registration information, please contact our Director, Jennifer Vilimonovic, at 330-722-1445.

Families that are members or friends of our church may register prior to January 25th by emailing Mrs. Vilimonovic at director@hobbyhorsepreschool.org.

Families currently enrolled in Hobby Horse may register beginning January 25 at 9:30am.

Siblings of former students may register beginning January 25 at 10:00am

Open Community registration will begin on January 25 at 10:30am.

Please feel free to share this with others who may be interested in our school.

GIVING FROM THE HEART – A gift to the Endowment Fund

January chilly snows give way to February bright red hearts of Valentine's Day. A reminder of loving and giving—and a time to focus on the return of the

ENDOWMENT FUND GIVING TREE

What is a Giving Tree? The GIVING TREE is a stout evergreen tree with cheerful hearts attached to the soft boughs. Each HEART has a reminder to folks to select a HEART off the tree and keep it as a reminder to make a gift to the Endowment Fund. The church family have been generous. The Endowment Fund has funded projects and programs for the church—all lovingly given.

Some of the projects and efforts supported by Endowment over the past few years include:

- Trips to Costa Rica
- Crossroads Display in the Hallway
- New Furniture for the East Room
- Support for the Operating Budget
- Our wonderful Historical Marker
- Bicentennial Memories
- Portable Sound System
- Ladies & Girls Spring Tea

Now is the time for the spirit of the heart to be made real in our church. Please stop by the Welcome Area and take a HEART. Keep it as a reminder to give generously from your heart. The cheerful giver within you will rejoice!

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

The Advent Food Donation for Claggett Middle School has shown how VERY thoughtful and generous our congregation is. What a wonderful assortment of food items! The response has been so wonderful that the counselor from Claggett has taken three full SUV's packed with our donations from our Welcome Area. This has enabled the counselor to deliver needed items to some of the student's families while they have been virtually learning. Thanks to everyone for giving so generously.

THANK YOU!

Since we were unable to do our annual Christ Tree because of the pandemic, we decided to do a gift card drive instead to be available to help those who come to the church looking for help. I am blown away by the response we got. All together we collected \$2,070.00 worth of gift cards. Thank you so much for being a blessing to others. Great work, Church!

January Pastor's Corner

Happy New Year, church! We have lots of fun stuff coming up in this fresh and exciting NOT 2020 year!

We had a great year for worship despite everything. Our livestream over the past 9 weeks (not including Christmas Eve) averaged 136 live viewers between our Facebook and website. One pastor friend of mine said that each of these views represents 2 people. Our worship then has averaged 272! That's pretty strong, church! We're getting a lot of views from new folks in the community and beyond.

If you are one of those new folks, and you're looking for a resolution you can keep not just this year but for many to come. consider joining the church! Our get-to-know-you **New Member virtual sessions** will be held on Monday, February 1 and 8 at 7 p.m. on Zoom. If you decide to join, then we'll have our New Member's Sunday on Founders Day, February 14, 2021. Details of how that will work will be discussed in the classes. I can't wait! It'll be a great time! Sign up by calling the office or emailing Cindy at office@uccmedina.org.

Our Treasurer Rob Kaiser is running his second **Financial Peace University**. This will be all virtual. You can sign up here: fpu.com/1127951. This program changes how you think and handle money! I love how passionate Rob is about this and how eager he is to share this program with any who need it.

Our **Annual Meeting** is usually held the last Sunday of January. This meeting is to approve the budget and take a look at the financials. We will handle this like we did in the summer. The reports will be posted online on 1/31 and will be available for pick up at the church for those who like a paper copy. We'll host a Zoom session on Wednesday, 2/3 at 7 p.m. for any questions you might have about the budget. You can also call Kelly at the office. Then we'll vote using our One Call system as well as paper ballots. Votes must be in by Sunday, February 7, at 10 a.m.

The year is off to a good start! Let's get at it, church!

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

Mark 1:4-11

Defining Moments

A rite of passage is a defining moment. Standing in the moment between two ages or phases of life, a rite of passage defines both who we were before the ritual and who we will become after it is completed. Anthropologists and theologians both know that we need rites of passage not only to know who we are individually but also to know who we are as part of our community. Without rites of passage, we cease to have these vital markers of our self and communal definition.

Baptism is a rite of passage for us, as it was for Jesus. Jesus goes to the river Jordan, where his cousin John is baptizing and calling for repentance or turning from sin. In the hundreds of pieces of art depicting this scene, we most often see Jesus alone with John - and sometimes the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. But Jesus was hardly alone. The scripture tells us that *everyone* in Jerusalem was there, along with many from the countryside. There would have been a giant crowd with Jesus, to take part in and witness this important rite of passage.

Many cultures and religions, including the Judaism of John and Jesus' time had a ritual of washing. Jesus' baptism was an evolution of that ancient rite. It was not meant to replace the old ritual, but the meaning shifted to accommodate new understandings about God, society, and individuals.

Think about the rites of passage in your own life. Consider the times when you made a change from one stage or age to another. Who was there to witness and to participate? How did the presence of the wider community help you feel God's presence? In our changing time, how have new rites of passage grown out of old ones?