

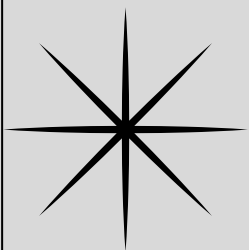
WINTER

Small Groups &
Bible Studies



MEDINA
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST. CONGREGATIONAL

SPRING



2024

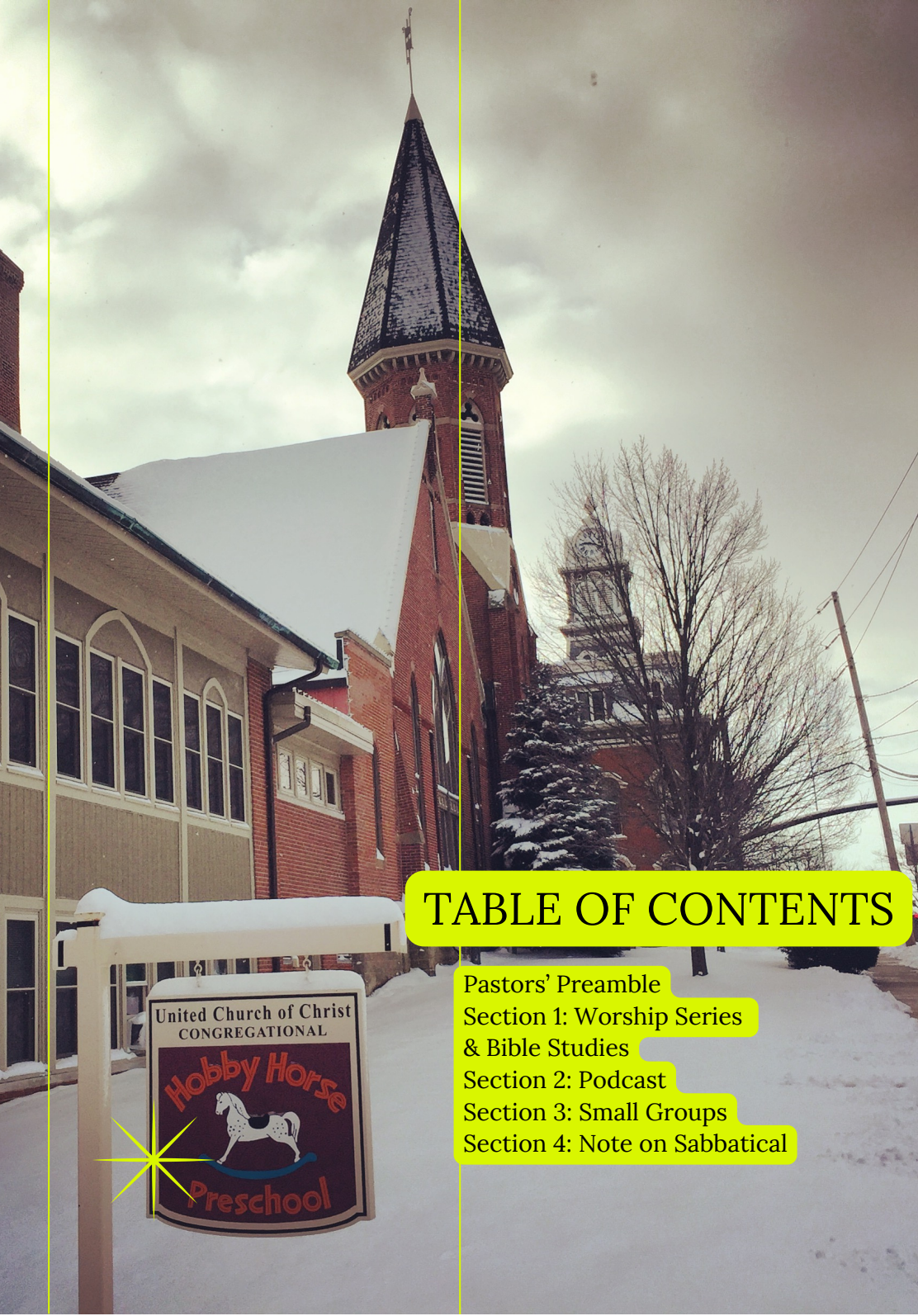


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Christmas announces that God is with us in Jesus! The Epiphany season helps us shed light on who Jesus is. Lent is a time of contemplating how to get closer to the divine within and among us. Holy Week encapsulates all the ups and downs life can throw our way. Easter is resurrection! Spring is with us again, death is defeated, the tomb is empty.

Just as winter surrenders to the gentle whispers of spring, may the chill of our challenges be replaced by the warmth of hope and the resurrection of joy. In the grand tapestry of life, Easter is our reminder that even the coldest seasons give way to the bloom of new beginnings. We hope what we have planned in the seasons to come does just that.

- Luke

Pastor Luke Lindon

- Meghan Malone

Pastor Meghan Malone



UPCOMING WORSHIP SERIES



GENERATION TO GENERATION G E N E A L O G Y O F J E S U S

January 7 to February 11, 2024



PARABLES

February 14 to March 24, 2024



April 7 to May 19, 2024

GENERATION TO GENERATION

EPIPHANY WORSHIP SERIES

Embark on a transformative journey through the pages of the Gospel of Matthew as we delve into the rich tapestry of Jesus Christ's genealogy in the worship series titled "Generation to Generation." This compelling exploration invites believers to uncover the profound significance of Jesus' ancestry, tracing His roots through generations and revealing the divine purpose woven into the fabric of human history.

Sunday, January 7: "Roots Revealed"

In the opening week, we will lay the foundation for our series by exploring the concept of genealogy and its cultural importance in biblical times. By closely examining the beginning of Matthew's Gospel, we'll discover the surprising characters and stories that make up Jesus' family tree. This session sets the stage for a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of Old Testament prophecies and the fulfillment found in Christ.

Sunday, January 14: "Breaking the Cycles"

We all inherit patterns from our ancestors. Sometimes we don't even know where they come from. Matthew connects Jesus with people who were complicated: both dedicated to God and also far from perfect. In his life, Jesus embodied the best parts of his lineage, honoring them while also being radically different.

GENERATION TO GENERATION

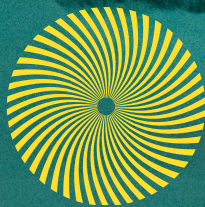
Sunday, January 21: "Royal Lineage" with the Rev. Mark Pettis, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Minister at UCC National. This week, we will focus on Josiah's reign and its profound impact on the unfolding narrative of salvation history.

Sunday, January 28: "Between the Lines"

In this reflective week, we'll turn our attention to the story of David and Jonathon. Explore the mystery and significance of their relationship, and consider how many kinds of loving relationships contribute to the broader tapestry of God's story and Jesus' family tree. One service at 10:30 for our Annual Meeting. Michael Sferro preaching.

Sunday, February 4: "In the Shadows of the Past"

Delve into the shadows of the past as we uncover the stories of those often overlooked in the genealogy—women. By examining the inclusion of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba, we'll witness how God's redemptive plan extends to those who have been wronged, offering hope and restoration to people of all genders.



GENERATION TO GENERATION

Sunday, February 11: "From Generation to Redemption"

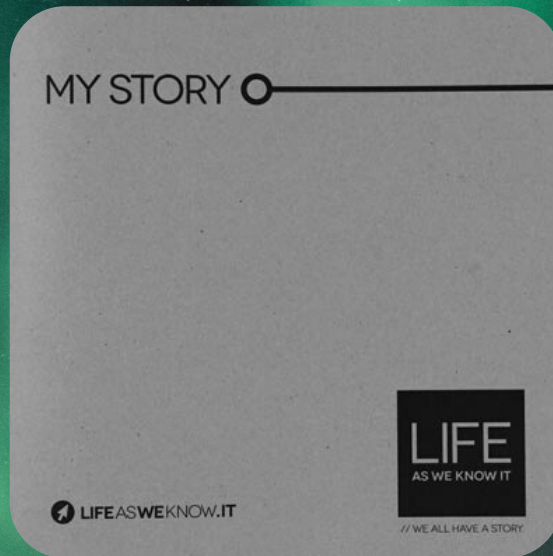
In the final week, we will tie together the threads of the series, exploring the overarching theme of redemption that flows through each generation. Participants will be encouraged to reflect on their own spiritual journey, recognizing their place in the ongoing narrative of God's redemptive story and the call to pass the message of salvation from generation to generation.

"Generation to Generation" is an invitation to rediscover Jesus Christ by examining His family tree, drawing inspiration from the stories of those who came before Him, and embracing our role in continuing the legacy of faith. Join us as we deepen our understanding of Jesus' identity, finding our place in the beautiful story of God's unfolding story of humanity.



**GENERATION TO
GENERATION**
G E N E A L O G Y
O F J E S U S

JANUARY BIBLE STUDY



“Life as We Know It” is a guided journey through your stories and the stories of others. It’s a book resource that will take you deeper into the lives of your friends, family, neighbors, and beyond.

We’ll gather **Mondays at 2 and 7 p.m.** from **January 22-February 12** in Fellowship Hall to work our way through this book and learn to share our stories together. Topics may include how we’ve redeemed pain, learned life lessons, and talked about God’s unfolding narrative of our life. Books available while supplies last.

Each person's life is a story that is telling itself in the living.

LENTEN WORSHIP SERIES

Why did Jesus teach in parables? In this Lenten series, we will immerse ourselves in the timeless and transformative parables shared by Jesus, each one a window into the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. As we delve into these narrative gems, we will unravel the profound truths they hold, gaining insights that will reshape our understanding of God, His kingdom, and our role within it.

Our scriptures will be brought to us by our Jesus Vibes Sunday School! They will share the videos of the Parables they have been making!

Ash Wednesday, February 14 to Palm Sunday, March 24

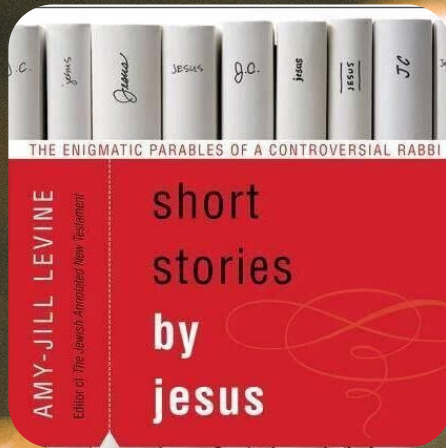


PARABLES

LENT 2024

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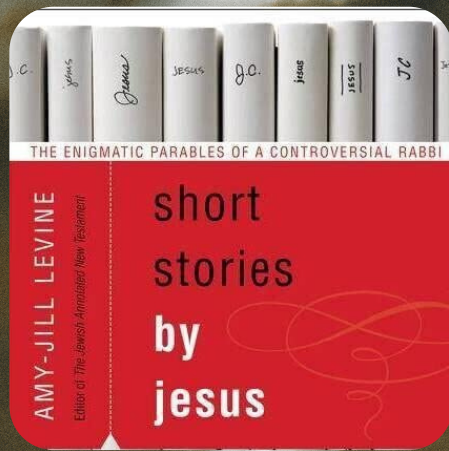
LENTEN BIBLE STUDY



Jesus was a skilled storyteller and perceptive teacher who used parables from everyday life to effectively convey his message and meaning. Life in first-century Palestine was very different from our world today.

In this wise and entertaining series, Amy-Jill Levine offers a fresh, timely reinterpretation of Jesus' narratives. She analyzes these "problems with parables," taking readers back in time to understand how their original Jewish audience understood them. Levine reveals the parables' connections to first-century economic and agricultural life, social customs and morality, Jewish scriptures and Roman culture. With this revitalized understanding, she interprets these moving stories for the contemporary reader, showing how the parables are not just about Jesus, but are also about us—and when read rightly, still challenge and provoke us 2,000 years later.

Amy-Jill Levine is Rabbi Stanley M. Kessler Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace. She is committed to eliminating antisemitic, sexist, and homophobic theologies.



We are partnering with our friends at St. Paul's Episcopal and St. Matthew's Lutheran for this companion study to our worship series!

We'll meet **Wednesdays at 7 p.m.** at the following locations:

February 21: St. Matthews, 400 N. Broadway, Medina

February 28: St. Paul's Episcopal, 317 E. Liberty St., Medina

March 6: United Church of Christ, Congregational

March 13: St. Matthews, 400 N. Broadway, Medina

March 21: United Church of Christ, Congregational

Come out and learn with our close neighbors! No book needed for this intriguing video series.

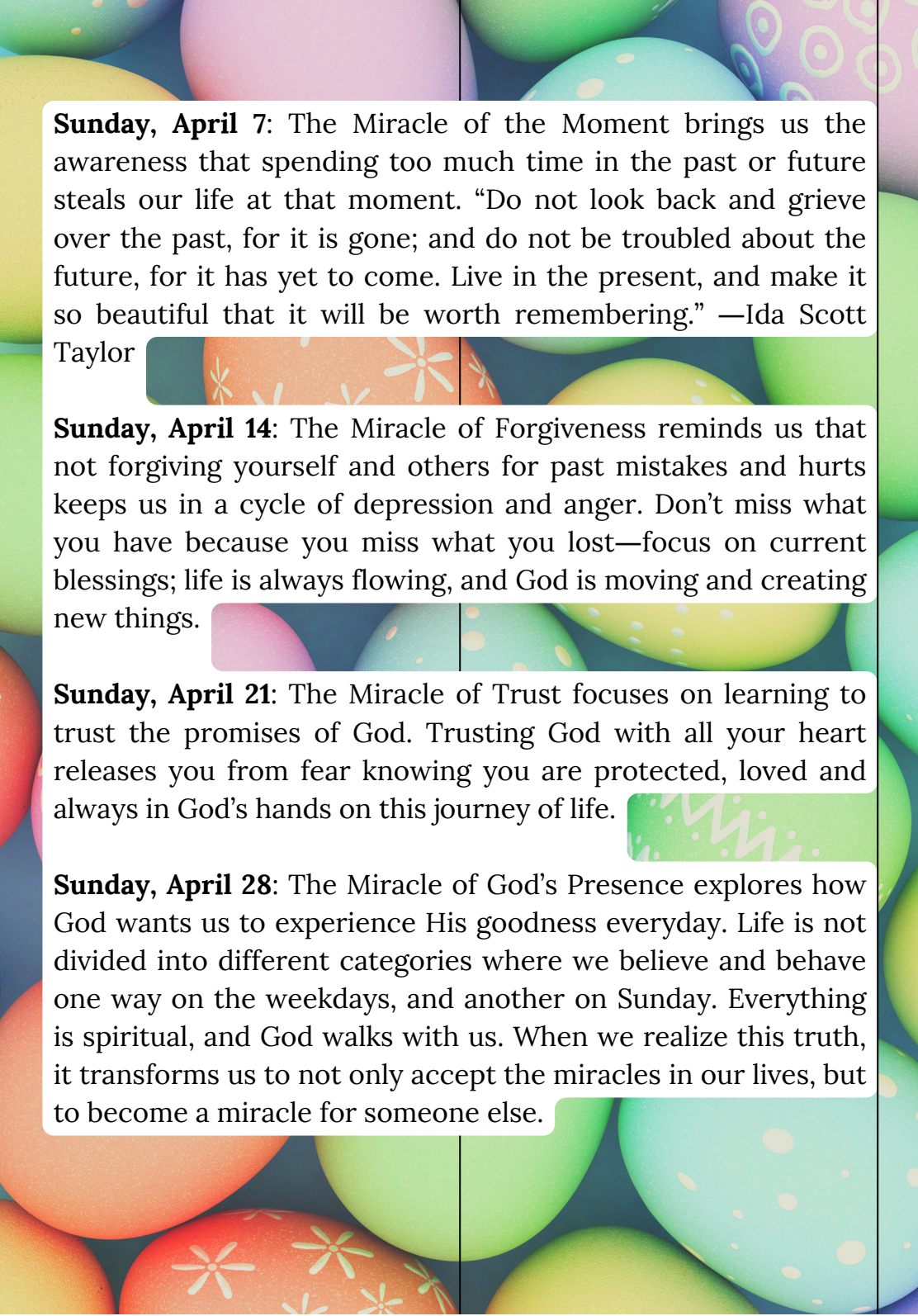


THE MIRACLE OF THE MOMENT: 60 GREAT DAYS EASTERTIDE WORSHIP SERIES

“What a world, what a world!” cried the Wicked Witch of the West as she melted at the end of the Wizard of Oz. So often we melt in the same despair and frustration as we navigate the world in which we find ourselves. How do we avoid a meltdown and live joyful, peaceful lives in the firestorm of wars, violence, rapidly changing technology and everyday worries and frustrations?

This series explores how we can pull back and focus on our inner life, and learn that the present moment is the gift of truly living. Selected topics in the series will highlight some of the most common reasons that become stumbling blocks to living in the moment and cause us to miss the miracles God sends our way.

Using scriptures, stories, poetry, music and art, each week will guide us onto a path that points the way to becoming more aware of the blessings and miracles that are given to us, if we only become aware of them.



Sunday, April 7: The Miracle of the Moment brings us the awareness that spending too much time in the past or future steals our life at that moment. “Do not look back and grieve over the past, for it is gone; and do not be troubled about the future, for it has yet to come. Live in the present, and make it so beautiful that it will be worth remembering.” —Ida Scott Taylor

Sunday, April 14: The Miracle of Forgiveness reminds us that not forgiving yourself and others for past mistakes and hurts keeps us in a cycle of depression and anger. Don't miss what you have because you miss what you lost—focus on current blessings; life is always flowing, and God is moving and creating new things.

Sunday, April 21: The Miracle of Trust focuses on learning to trust the promises of God. Trusting God with all your heart releases you from fear knowing you are protected, loved and always in God's hands on this journey of life.

Sunday, April 28: The Miracle of God's Presence explores how God wants us to experience His goodness everyday. Life is not divided into different categories where we believe and behave one way on the weekdays, and another on Sunday. Everything is spiritual, and God walks with us. When we realize this truth, it transforms us to not only accept the miracles in our lives, but to become a miracle for someone else.

Confirmation Sunday, May 5: The Miracle of Gratitude encourages us to develop a heart that appreciates everything it is given; remember and recognize your blessings. By expressions of gratitude and encouragement to ourselves and others, we build our inner spirit to stay aware of the good things we have rather than dwelling on the negative.

Sunday, May 12: The Miracle of Hope can sometimes be lost under the burdens of today. Letting go of disappointments in life, especially when life doesn't turn out the way we expected, can be very difficult. Keep hope alive by speaking blessings and staying positive. Your words have power, so make sure you are speaking strength and hope daily. Remember, every trouble has an expiration date.

Pentecost Sunday, May 19: The Miracle of the Holy Spirit is given to us to guide us on our journey of emotional and spiritual evolution. Learn to live life from the inside out rather than the outer world impacting your soul. God's wisdom and power within you is greater than any circumstance in your life. There will be one service at 10:30 for our annual meeting.

Miracle 

THE MIRACLE OF THE MOMENT BIBLE STUDY

What did Pastor Luke, Pastor Meghan, and the worship team study to get ready for the Miracle of the Moment worship series? Come on out and find out! Meeting in Fellowship Hall on **Mondays at 2 & 7 p.m. April 15-May 20**. No need to read ahead, but you are welcome to! We'll present the books. We'll read a few together. For all ages and abilities.

Let us be present to one another. Classes are as follows:

April 15: Poetry of the Present, featuring Hafiz, Jane Kenyon, Mary Oliver and more!

April 22: How to Be Here as Church, meet our new members & talk church

April 29: Children's Books in the Present

May 6: How to be Here by Rob Bell book review

May 13: Be Here Now by Ram Dass book review

May 20: Wild Hope by Donna Ashworth book review



A Note on How to Be Here As Church

On **Monday, April 22 at 2 & 7 p.m.** we'll have a membership class. We'll invite folks who want to join the church as new members to be with us. The moderators and Pastor Luke usually meet with them and talk life and church and give a tour of our grounds.

Yet some seasoned members might need a refresher or have questions... or just want to welcome, love, and serve our new members who are considering joining us officially.

All are invited out to talk church. Sharing life, unscripted. Whether brand new or a 50-year member, all are invited!



REV'D UP PODCAST!



tinyurl.com/RevUp

**Top Podcast for 22
fans**

36
Top 5

40
Top 10



 Spotify for Podcasters #SPOTIFYWRAPPED

Beyond the Canon: Hidden Gospels Exposed

Have you read the Infancy Gospel of Thomas? Have you heard of the Gospel of Mary Magdalene?

Join Pastors Meghan and Luke as they get rev'd up about texts that didn't make it into the Biblical canon.

This summer, the podcast available on Spotify will cover the Nag Hammadi texts and more!

Take church with you wherever you vacation!

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

YOUTH GROUP

1ST & 3RD
SUNDAYS
4:30-6PM



*Learning, Serving,
and Welcoming All!*



Confirmation is
hitting the road!

February 11:
Visit to the Islamic
Center of Cleveland

March 1:
Interfaith service
at Temple Israel

March 8-9:
Overnight retreat at
Temple Hills Camp



Teen Church
During the 10:30 service
in the Youth Room

December 31

January 28

February 25

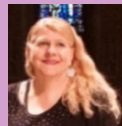
March 24

and April 28



*YOU
Matter*

Music Notes



Chancel Choir

First Chancel Choir Rehearsal in 2024:

Wednesday, January 10 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Please email jenny@uccmedina.org if you'd like to join this adult choir!

Rehearsals:

January 10-February 7:

Wednesdays from 7:30-8:30 p.m.

February 18- March 24:

Thursdays from 7:30-8:30 p.m. (6 weeks)

Following Easter, we'll go back to Wednesdays 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Exciting new music both traditional and contemporary styles will be sung! We'll be working on a cool Cantata called the "Missa Gaia" A Mass for the Earth!



Alleluia Dingers

First Handbell Choir Rehearsal in 2024:

Wednesday, January 10 6-7:15 p.m.

Please email jenny@uccmedina.org if you'd like to join the Bell Choir!

Rehearsals:

January 10-February 7:

Wednesdays from 6-7:15 p.m.

February 18- March 24:

Thursdays from 6-7:15 p.m. (6 weeks)

Following Easter, we'll go back to

Wednesdays 6-7:15 p.m.

We will continue to explore new bell music and if we increase our members, we can increase the bell range for even more incredible sounds!

Children's Choir

Children grades K-6

First Children's Choir rehearsal in 2024:
Sunday, January 10 9:45-10:15 a.m.

Rehearsals are Sunday mornings before the 10:30 service.

Contact Jenny Cochran for more info at jenny@uccmedina.org

Starting in January, we will be incorporating more percussive and mallet instruments into our music.





MEN'S BREAKFAST

All men of the church are invited to have breakfast with each other, usually on the **first Tuesday of each month**. It will be rescheduled if it falls on a holiday. We meet at Buehler's River Styx at 8 a.m. There is no formal program, just a chance for fellowship.

There is no signup, just come! Email Pete Benson at sydandpete.benson@gmail.com to receive reminders.

MEN'S GROUP

The Men's Group meets the **first and third Sundays** in the New Library in the Welcome Area from 4:30-6 p.m. We utilize the Way of Council, a communal contemplative practice that fosters a heart-centered way of listening, speaking and being with others. Men can speak without being judged or shamed and share the real challenges of the different roles we have in life: husband/partner, father, grandfather, brother, provider, businessman, mentor, and apprentice. Contact Chuck Rihm at 440-503-8021 or rihm@compuserve.com



TUESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

We are focused on finding Jesus in the Old Testament and will eventually end up in the New Testament. There is no right or wrong point of view in our group, just people exploring the Bible together. All are welcome!



Church Library from
7-8:30 p.m.

This group is led by Frank Kish with added input from his wife, Pastor Karen Brocco-Kish.

Contact Frank at
fdk7@aol.com

“THIS IS NOT A BOOK CLUB”

This is most certainly not a book club. Sure, we read a book and discuss it. But there is also pizza. And friends. And time to hang out. And games. And potentially costumes. So, definitely not a book club. But you should join us as we learn a little more about being human (and surviving middle school) through literature. Drop your **middle schooler** off at the church (Room 7) the **first Monday of the month** (except for holidays) from 5-7 p.m. Pizza is provided, but feel free to bring a snack to share!

If you want more information or to find out our current book selection to prepare for the next meeting, contact Kenzie Armbrust at 740-606-2073 or armbrustway@gmail.com



OPEN AND AFFIRMING

Dear friends,

“Open and Affirming” is a designation within the United Church of Christ for congregations and other bodies within the UCC who make a public covenant of welcome into their full life and ministry to persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. Full life and ministry means sacraments (baptism and communion), marriage, and all leadership roles. Council recently voted to begin a process of conversation, education, and discernment within the congregation to determine whether Medina UCCC might now move forward with becoming an ONA congregation.

Who is on the ONA Task Force for our church? Pam Branscome, Dan Daubner, Vicki Marty, Brad Rice, Michael Sferro, and Lily Wolff. Feel free to call, email, or engage in person with any one of us with questions or comments. You may email the Task Force at ONA@uccmedina.org. We are excited and would love to talk with you!

Faithfully,

Pam, Dan, Vicki, Brad, Michael, and Lily



NOTE ON SABBATICAL



At the risk of sounding cheesy, I really like y'all. I wanted to take time to write about this summer and my sabbatical.

Every 5 years, I am granted a 3-month sabbatical. During this time I will be out for rest and will not attend church or officiate weddings or funerals. I will not look for another call or job. Following the sabbatical, I must continue with the church for at least a year. All of this is outlined in our employment handbook and my pastoral contract.

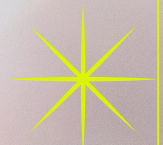
Pastor Meghan and the staff will handle worship from Memorial Day to Labor Day. You might see me around town. Please say hi! We just won't talk church.

Thank you for this gift. It is much-needed. I look forward to reconnecting with my family and myself during this time.

When God called us together 7 years ago, I felt two calls. The first is to get the word out about the best church in Medina County. The second is to be the longest serving pastor in our history. I still feel that way.

I hope this time will be one of rest and renewal. It's not even halftime. This is just a pause so we can come roaring back and be about the mission of welcoming, loving, and serving.

-Pastor Luke



MEDINA

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL

MORE THAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY!

The church is the people. Thank you for being church in all the ways you are gifted. Showing up is 90% of anything, and we sure have shown up with and for one another.

