



# Parish News

2024

## First United Church of Christ

### A Note from Your Pastor

Fellow Christians:

M-A-Y. That is how most people spell the name of the fifth month of the calendar year that signifies that we are almost half-way through the year. I say “most people” because in our house we spell it M-U-D!

With the combination of wet weather and seven canines (I guess they won't be reading this so I can use dogs), our house, clothing, furniture, etc. is covered with mud. The definition of impossible is trying to wipe clean 28 paws! Our dogs really enjoy being outside, especially in the warmer temperatures. They live very busy lives outside. There are squirrels to chase, fence lines to inspect and protect, scents to roll in, sticks to chew, and of course the occasional neighbor or visitor to the neighborhood to bark at! (Imagine people having the nerve to walk down the street! Some even bring dogs with them!)

All this activity, not to mention helping mom and dad do yardwork, means that they get covered in mud. Which means that they then track it everywhere they go. For us humans it means mops, buckets, sponges, brooms, vacuums, and the dreaded carpet cleaner, to attempt to restore order and cleanliness. It seems to be never ending!

One rather strange aspect of the mud issue is that no matter how much dried up mud the pups have on their paws when they go to bed at night, they are always clean in the morning. (They actually clean their feet during the night and start fresh the next day!)



Buckner



Minnie



Gracie



Penny



## A Note from Your Pastor (continued)



Pedro



Okto



MoMo

Dealing with mud is very similar to dealing with another three-letter word: S-I-N. Sin seems to get on us and we can track it everywhere! It can affect everything in our lives and compound over time. Sin can cover the beauty of who we really are; keeping us from shining as we were meant to as part of God’s creation! Fortunately, sin, like mud, can be cleaned. Not with any broom, mop, or vacuum, but through the saving grace of another three-letter word: G-O-D.

God has provided us the opportunity to cleanse ourselves of sin through Jesus Christ. When Jesus allowed Himself to be crucified on that cross, He took our sins upon Himself and to the grave. Not just for a day, but for all time! We just need to remember to bring ourselves before Him and ask Him to cleanse us. There is nothing Jesus can’t clean us from! No matter how covered in sin we get, Jesus can cleanse us pure. We just need to be willing to let go of our sinful ways, repent, and work to stay as clean as we can. When we falter, and we do, we need to repeat the process.

How fortunate and blessed we are to have a loving and forgiving Lord. Let us worship and praise Him without end and work hard to keep ourselves clean of sin.

May almighty God bless you all!

*Pastor Gerry*

March Income	March Expenditures	March Net
\$6,447.26	\$6,326.32	\$120.94





## May Update

Hello everyone! Even though this is the May Update, I find myself writing it in mid April so that you may have it in your hands by the beginning of May. We have had some really special happenings lately. First, we celebrated the Resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ, on March 31. That was followed by one of the rarities and beauties of our God's creation, that being the total eclipse of the sun. What two beautiful experiences! As for Easter Sunday, Karen and I had an opportunity to worship with nearly two thousand other people on the beach in Florida for an Easter sunrise service. It was an experience I'll never forget. These events were then followed by a beautiful evening of Gospel music with Hamilton Road. They brought us their wonderful talents on April 13 and filled our sanctuary with their wonderful voices. Thanks to everyone who came and to Bob and Sally Spencer for arranging their visit. Also thanks to our Deacons and everyone who provided the delicious refreshments.

Switching gears, I've been following a recent item in the news about the cutting down of some trees in front of Warren G. Harding High School. There were a lot folks unhappy with this, especially since some of the trees were planted at one time in memory of some well-regarded educators in the system. I have to admit that I was a little taken back when I first observed the missing trees. It was later pointed out the trees were not healthy and it had come to a point where they could become a danger due to limbs and branches falling when they die. As a person who lives in a neighborhood with many older trees, I experience this frequently. It was pointed out by the school superintendent that the trees would be replaced.

My point here is that things go through life cycles. Here in Warren, Ohio we have lost a lot of the population due to various factors, most notably the loss of good paying jobs. A population of over 70,000 in the early 1970s is now down to less than 40,000. That resulted going from two high schools to one, a decision that is still somewhat contentious in this town. Some will say the decline in population is because of folks moving to the suburbs, but they are losing population also.

Here at First Church we are also in a steep decline. Our current attendance currently averages about 25 per Sunday. As a result we are most likely facing closure in the not too distant future. By now many of you have received letters addressing this issue. On April 15, The General Minister from the Living Waters Association of the United Church of Christ spoke with a group of about 25 people from our church family concerning our situation. Reverend Nayiri Kargian presented a very informative talk about dealing with this issue. The important thing I gleaned from her was that we should not dwell on what we could have done to prevent

(continued on page 4)





## May Update (continued)

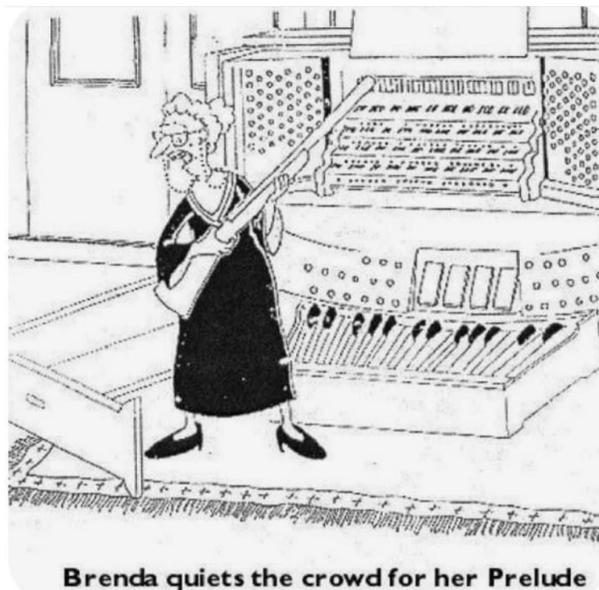
this situation. Many churches in the both the UCC and other denominations are in a similar situation. One of the things that contributes to this decline is our style of worship. Our children and grandchildren want something different. As one person pointed out, if we were to switch to something more in tune with younger people, where would attraction be for our generation? There are no easy answers.

In facing closure, have we failed? I don't think so. This congregation has done many wonderful things. It has touched many people not only in our church family but in the community as well. Each of us has at least one story about how it has touched them. In the future we are going to get together to share those stories. That will be a glorious day! Until then the question on everyone's mind will be where do we go if we close? At this point we don't have an answer, but it will definitely be discussed. In the meantime the leadership of this fine church will work to move ahead and keep you informed. Even though this building may not be a meeting place for this congregation in the future, Its spirit will live on. The building is not the church, its people is the foundation.

Just a couple of housekeeping notes; we will honor our moms on Mother's Day, May 12, Pentecost is May 19 with Holy Communion and Memorial Sunday is May 26. May 26 also begins our summer worship hours at 10:00am with no Sunday school.

Till next month, see you in Sunday school and for heaven's sake remember our shut-ins.

Ron Schoch





## Prayer List

Becky Callahan	Dick Leiby	Layes Wood	<b>Shut-ins:</b>
Jerry Currie	Marilyn Leiby		Donna Beavers
Rodger Davis	Greg Leigh		Ruth Gilbert
Steve Doracin	Dean Mahalick	Those affected by	Betty Howren
Phil Fletcher	Peggy Marshall	the conflicts through	Dick Leiby
Donald Gammon	Larry Mattison	out the world.	Marilyn Leiby
Wesley Gault	Kay Patrick		Glenn Mark
Phil Graham	Jeff Robinson		Norma Patchin
Ruth Gilbert	Mary Sabol		Barb Sponaugle

## Floating Five Emergency Fund

In July 2009, the Floating Five Committee decided to start an emergency account to help those in the church having an unexpected need for money such as a car repair, medical bill, or legitimate need as recommended by church members or staff, etc. Please speak with Judy Fabian, Keith Burger, Karen Schoch, or Rev. Gammon should you have such a need.

This is a confidential service available to any church member, staff member, or anyone who attends regularly. This is not intended to be an ongoing source of income but rather for emergency situations which one might encounter.

## Prayer Chain/List

The Prayer Chain has been slightly revised. As a reminder, names of people for the Prayer Chain with specific messages are prayed for regularly for that person for seven days. Be sure to begin your request by calling the church office or by filling out a prayer request card.

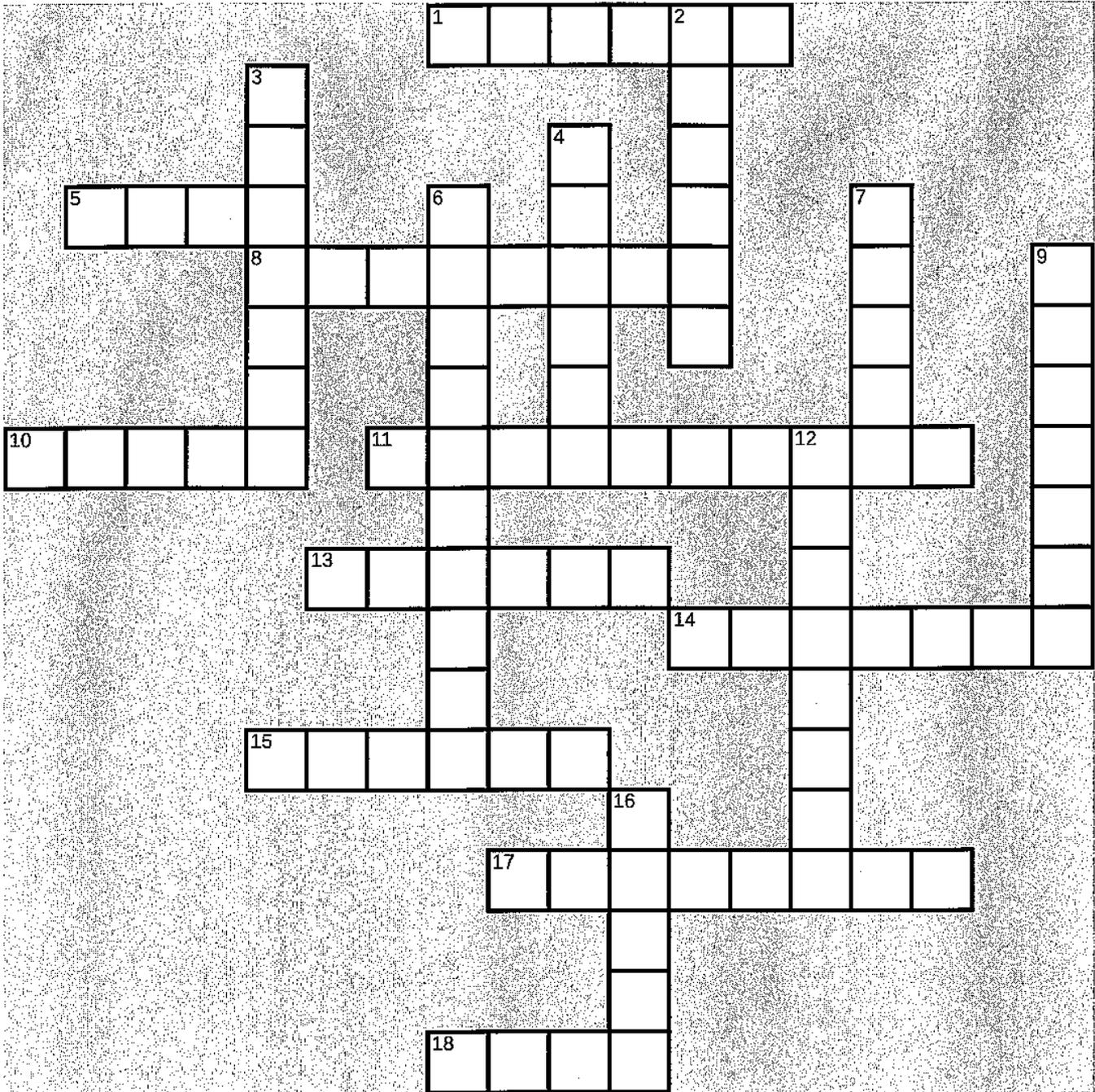
Names on the Prayer List in the weekly bulletin will be carried for that month unless requested it be continued on or removed prior to the end of the month.

\*\*If you would like to be a caller and offer prayers for those on the prayer chain, please notify the church office (330) 394-4741 or fill out a prayer request card.





# Church Stuff





## Word List

### Across

- 1 A powerful tool
- 5 Church song
- 8 Hand waiver
- 10 Above the altar
- 11 Church leaders
- 13 Long winded
- 14 Worker bees
- 15 The word of the Lord
- 17 Brings you up or down
- 18 Places to sit

### Down

- 2 Not all are older
- 3 Fire bearers
- 4 Collection
- 6 Sharing with one another
- 7 Church singers
- 9 Nature on the altar
- 12 Key presser
- 16 Head of the church

## Toy Drive 2024

We are once again holding our Toy Drive, from now until the end of November, for the Warren Family Mission. If you wish to participate, there will be a bin in the lobby where you can drop off any new, unwrapped toys at any time.

In late November or early December, we will take these toys to the Mission for their yearly Christmas give away. Please keep in mind that while it's fun to shop for the little ones, there are teenagers who need love and support at Christmas also.

Thank you in advance for your kindness. If you have any questions, please see Karen Schoch.

## Flowers

Again this year we are seeking donations to cover the cost of flowers to be planted outside our church. If you want to contribute to this effort, please place your donation in an envelope and mark it for "outside flowers". Thank you.

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**First United Church of Christ**

280 E. Market Street  
Warren, Ohio 44481  
(330) 394-4741  
Email: firstuccwarren@gmail.com



*The church with the “golden dome”*

website  
[www.firstuccwarren.org](http://www.firstuccwarren.org)

**Pastor:**

Rev./Dr. Gerald Gammon

**Pastor Emeritus:**

Joe Doran  
Everett Gould

**Elder Emeritus:**

Al Conklin  
Nick Fabian  
Ed Gilbert  
Don Howren  
Glenn Mark  
Sylvia Moyes  
Bill Paxson  
George Schneider  
Bill Schoch  
Charles Weller  
Ken Wright

**Deacon Emeritus:**

Dick Leiby



**Consistory**

<b>President:</b>	Ron Schoch	<b>Elders:</b>	Keith Burger	12/31/26
			Jr. Fumerola	12/31/24
<b>Vice President:</b>	Bill Paxson		Linda Paxson	12/31/24
			Bill Paxson	12/31/24
			Karen Schoch	12/31/26
<b>Secretary:</b>	Nancy Hamrick			
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Rev. Gammon	<b>Deacons:</b>	Melanie Burger	12/31/24
			Sheryl Cozad	12/31/25
			Judy Fabian	12/31/24
<b>Financial Officer:</b>	Sheryl Cozad		Marian Gammon	12/31/25
			Candy Lemasters	12/31/25
<b>Bookkeeper:</b>	Sheryl Cozad		Sharon Longworth	12/31/25
			Debbie Wimer	12/31/24

