



# The Ambassador

August 2022

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## From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

I redesigned a room in my house in July. The planning stage was invigorating! It was lots of fun to think about what the room could look like: a few new pieces of furniture, new curtains, new decorations – just a whole refreshed look. I was excited to begin, after all, trips to IKEA are fun!

The first step was to take everything out of the room which was energizing at first. I had the final product in mind and I was hopeful. But it didn't take too long for that to change. With the room still halfway full of stuff to be emptied and sorted, my optimism started to waiver. My living room and dining room were full of the contents of the other room and it wasn't even empty yet! Despair set in.

Maybe you have a home improvement project story like this. At some point in the project, usually far enough in that you can't turn back but far enough away that the end isn't in sight, you slump down on a pile of stuff (because no empty chair is available) and you ask yourself, "What have I done?"

One of the lessons I have to learn over and over again is that progress takes time. I do not get to fast forward through all of the painfully slow parts of learning and growing. Flowers take time to bloom, gardens take time to yield, trees take time to grow a canopy. Even though it seems as though change is always fast, growing takes time. Growing takes grace.

This, of course, is true with growing in our faith. The fruit of spiritual disciplines seldom seem evident at first. It is rare that

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### Worship With Us

Online & In Person  
Worship @10:30 am  
Sunday School @ 9

In Person & Online  
Bible Studies  
@ 10 am Wednesdays and  
@ 6 pm Thursdays

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one prayer helps a person feel closer to God – but the daily practice of prayer can nurture a sense of connection that yields fruit of discernment, partnership, trust, and faith.

God knows that growth takes time so let us learn again the need to be patient with ourselves. God's grace abounds! I find scripture verses help me with this. A few of my favorites:

God makes all things beautiful in his time. Ecclesiastes 3:11, KJV

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. I Corinthians 13:12, NRSV

I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6, NRSV

And along those lines of completion, I think I am finishing my project today! After I finish this letter to you, I'm heading back in there to do the last finishing touches. All it took was grace and time.

Peace,  
Pastor Kim



### **MEET & GREET WITH PASTOR KIM**

We have opportunities, in August & September, for you to gather in small groups to meet and/or greet Pastor Kim. These events will help her get to know us. These gatherings are limited to 12-15 persons. For more information or to sign up for an August event, please call the church office

(513-423-4629)



# Music and Worship Notes by Mary Ellen Clinard

Have you ever wondered about the person who writes the Music Notes we find in our bulletins each Sunday? For several years now, these insightful writings have served to connect the choir anthem with some part of the scripture or focus for that particular Sunday morning.

Let's learn a little bit about Stephen Garrett, the author of those thoughts and reflections:

You may notice Stephen as one of the tallest people in the choir! He sings bass and has been an integral part of our choir since he started attending here. From time to time, he has also played guitar and sung some original songs. This well-traveled man often splits his time between Florida where he and his wife have family, and the SW Ohio area; frequently traveling back and forth several times a month.

Stephen grew up Catholic and moved from his birthplace in Chicago to Northern New Jersey when he was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. He often played for Mass with his guitar and sang in several choirs. When he met his wife, Gloria, he found himself married into a Methodist family of choral singers and fully embraced the Methodist love of singing. Thank you, Gloria! They have one daughter, Gisela.

Armed with a degree in Engineering from Michigan and advanced degrees and studies from Pennsylvania, he is a Management Scientist by profession. Stephen has traveled the world working for companies such as General Electric, Mars (think candy bars!), and Inter-Continental Hotels.

Although no stranger to writing analysis reports, he finds taking a "deeper dive" into the words and music of our anthems and relating them to scripture or current events quite rewarding. A self-professed "grammar geek", he says this—

*"Writing the Music Notes is a dream assignment in many ways. I do love writing; I also love singing, especially choral singing; and I love the Lord, and have immense gratitude for my faith journey and where it's taken me. (Writing) the Music Notes helps bring that all together for me."*

As the Music Director, I love discovering each week what Stephen has written about my anthem choices for that Sunday, and am always amazed at the insight, comparisons, parallels, and contrasts he can find not only in the written word but in the architecture of the music as well.

## A Note from Rev. Daniel Cardenas, Associate Pastor

**Where is your brother?**

**Genesis 4:8-9**

When we read this Bible story, we focus on the gift that Cain and Abel offered to God, but we ignore another special teaching for us here.

We must indeed watch our attitude toward our worship of God. We must give to Him our best praise and worship, however, the intention of this passage also makes us think about our attitude when we treat our neighbor.

First of all, who is my neighbor? That was a question that a law interpreter made to Jesus to ignore his own responsibility to take care of his brothers and sisters. He expected an unchallenging answer, something that supported his idea of conditional love, instead of that, Jesus replied with a story that challenged him and challenges us today. My brother and sister who don't think like me, who do not look like me, and, those who hurt me or hate me, those people are my neighbor. The Bible tells us, *"If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much, or if you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? (Matt.5.46)* So, to make a real difference we must love and embrace all, including our enemies. Remember, *if your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads. (Rom. 12:20)*

Once we have an understanding of who is my neighbor, could we answer the same question that God asked Cain? Cain killed his brother, and when God asked him about Abel, he answered with indifference, with a cold attitude toward his brother's death. He said, "Am I my brother's guardian?" What an answer! He did not care anything about Abel; he acted with contempt and rebellion.

God keeps us away from this kind of numb behavior when he asks us about our brothers and sisters. Let us be ready to answer the question with love, kindness, and mercy. There are many ways to help and take care of our neighbors and it does not matter if they are from another country, if they have different skin color, or even if they speak another language. Love and mercy break all these barriers. Let's recall this:

*"Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law" (Romans 13:10)* and *"Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good." (Romans 12:21).*

## Blessing of the Backpacks – August 7<sup>th</sup>!

It is hard to believe that the school year is upon us – where did the summer go? We want our students and their families to begin the school year knowing that we are praying for them and praying for our schools. We are inviting our students to bring their backpacks to worship on Sunday, August 7<sup>th</sup> for a Blessing of the Backpacks. Students and their families will be invited forward for a special prayer time and will be given a backpack tag as well as some family prayers for the school year. Don't have a backpack? That is just fine, blessings are still available as well as the resources!



## Three Simple Rules Worship Series Beginning August 14<sup>th</sup>

Sometimes it feel impossible to live a faithful life in our complex and growingly divided world. Scripture tells us over and over again that faithfulness is possible, even in the midst of difficult times. But how do we go about applying these biblical principles of faithfulness to our lives?

Three simple rules can help you live in a way that loves neighbor and loves God as you seek to live a life that brings God glory. These three simple rules come to us from the founder of the Methodist movement, John Wesley. Wesley was in ministry with everyday people who were seeking to live faithfully in the world. He offered these early Methodists systems of accountability and he offered them what is known as the General Rules. Although Wesley's language is dated, the General Rules are still as applicable today as they were back in 1739 when he first offered them. In 2007, Bishop Rueben Job simplified Wesley's language and shared the General Rules as Three Simple Rules.

If being faithful feels unfeasible in our world that seems to grow more and more divided by the day, the Three Simple Rules will speak to you. In worship we will explore a rule each week and learn how to love God and love neighbor as we strive to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ. If you want to read a little bit more about these rules, you can purchase Three Simple Rules by Rueben Job for less than \$7 and it is available in English and in Spanish. This little book has not only an essay by Bishop Job on each of the three rules but also a simple guide to daily prayer as well. It will complement your worship experience but it is not necessary for you to have a meaningful worship on Sunday mornings during this series.



# 2022 First Friday Concert & Artist Series

## RICHARD GOERING

Come and experience the rich melodies and haunting rhythm of Spanish Guitar and Classical favorites

**Friday, August 5**

**@Noon**

**First UMC-Middletown**

**Free Admission**

**masks encouraged, not required**

## HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS

### FLIP FLOP INTO SUMMER



It's back! We are showing our love and support to the WOMEN of Hope House by providing them with flip flops for use in the communal showers for hygiene purposes. We are asking for sizes 6-12 for women ONLY at this time! (Most importantly on the larger sizes as we never

seem to have enough)! If you can't/don't want to shop, we will gladly do it for you. There is a plastic bin available in which to put your purchases. It is located in the North Foyer. Please contact Sonya Kramer with any questions.

Thank you for helping us show love to the community by donating to the "Flip Flop Into Summer" program!!

### CLOTHING AND LINEN NEEDS

The Interchurch Clothes Closet, located at 114 S. Broad St. at St. Paul's UCC, is in need of the following:

- Men's Clothes, especially jeans - All Sizes
- Underwear, Socks - All Sizes
- Linens, Blankets, Queen Size Sheets



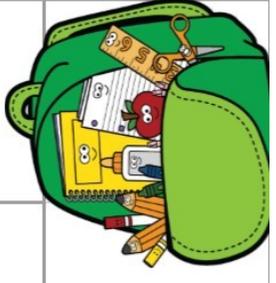
The Closet is open on Tuesdays from 10 am—1 pm. You may drop off any donations during this time. If you need to drop off at another day/time, please call 513-422-4519 and leave a message.

# August 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Dates to Remember in <b>September:</b> 2 First Friday Concert 4 Communion Sunday 7 Choir Potluck	1 8:30 am Breakfast Club	2 2 pm Pantry	3 10am Son Reflectors' Bible Study 6 pm Corazones Ardientes Bible Study	4 6:00 Sonshine Bible Study	5 Noon First Friday Concert	6
7 COMMUNION SUN-DAY 9 am Sunday School 10:30am Worship	8 8:30 am Breakfast Club 2:30 pm Pantry Mtg.	9 11 am Memorials 1 pm SPRC Mtg 2 pm Pantry	10 10am Son Reflectors' Bible Study 6 pm Corazones Ardientes Bible Study	11 6 pm Sonshine Bible Study	12	13
14 9 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship	15 8:30 am Breakfast Club	16 2 pm Pantry 5:30 pm Finance Mtg 6 pm Church Council Mtg	17 10am Son Reflectors' Bible Study 6 pm Corazones Ardientes Bible Study	18 6 pm Sonshine Bible Study	19	20 9 am Hope Circle @ Bob Evans
21 9 am Sunday School 10:30am Worship	22 8:30 am Breakfast Club	23 2 pm Pantry NO Trustees Mtg.	24 10am Son Reflectors' Bible Study 6 pm Corazones Ardientes Bible Study	25 6 pm Sonshine Bible Study	26	7
28 9 am Sunday School 10:30am Worship	29 8:30 am Breakfast Club	30 2 pm Pantry	31 10am Son Reflectors' Bible Study 6 pm Corazones Ardientes Bible Study			

## Birthdays

- John Tack August 1
- Stuart Wilson August 1
- Imogene Orts August 2
- Debbie August 4
- Hazelbaker August 4
- Karen Cooper August 5
- Steve Urso August 9
- Linda Snyder August 12
- Bev Urso August 13
- Edna Palmer August 14
- Ted Wilson August 15
- Charles Orth August 19
- Karol King August 20
- Jeffrey Thomas August 21
- Clinard August 21
- Ben David August 21
- Morgan August 21
- Robert Mucha August 21
- Joyce Parrella August 21
- Nick Murphy August 23
- Martha Swank August 23
- Rachel Hurley August 25
- Kathleen August 26
- Darling August 26
- Cheryl Irwin August 26
- Bill Schaefer August 28
- Susan Wittman August 28
- Linda Fillnow August 29





A New  
Worship  
Series in  
August

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