

The Good News

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC

ANGOLA, IN

JANUARY 2020

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Bi-Annual Congregational Meeting on January 19 at 11:15 a.m.**
- **Men's Breakfast meets at Auntie V's at 8:15 a.m. on January 21.**

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John P. Gardner's Farewell

By Vickie Harris

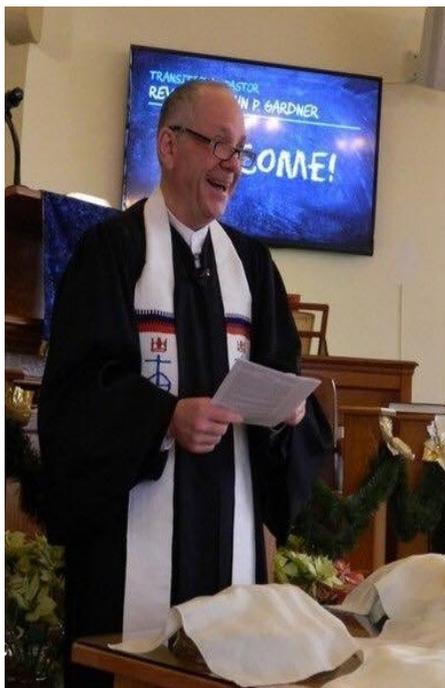
Good-bye's are never easy, even when they are tied to joyful occasions! Sunday, January 5, was not only the first Sunday of a new year, a year when we have the awesome opportunity to welcome a fantastic new minister, Nikki Shaw to pastor our church family, but this Sunday was a time to say farewell to John Pugh Gardner, who has served us so faithfully since last July.

John made it clear from the beginning that he was to be referred to as "Transitional Pastor and Teacher." But in the seven months with us, he quickly earned an additional title that was just as meaningful, he became our "friend."

Throughout the time John was with us, we all were inspired and learned from John's sermons and lessons, including his reoccurring final blessing, "We aren't here for very long, so let's make the most of it in Jesus' name."



Amen and thank you, John P. Gardner.





Pastor Nikki Shaw

“So, is it exciting and a little scary and full of possibilities for us to be living into a new pastorate together? You bet.”

Big FCUCC turnout at Pastor Nikki's ordination. It was a beautiful ceremony and a perfect start to our covenant with Nikki. Much thanks to Peace UCC for hosting us!

From the Pastor's Screen

About that “and” . . .

Welcome to *and*. It's where we all are right now, that stepping stone between before and after. In fancy vocabulary terms, that “and” represents my favorite word: liminal. Liminal means the space, place, or time between who we were and who we will be. Pregnant women occupy liminal space. So do engaged couples. So do the dying. It's a space that is unsettling, but also full of possibility and, often, clarity.

If we take a minute to apply our Christian lens to liminality—a faith that says live today as if God's tomorrow has already come—we can see that the Christian is always in liminal space. They are always growing toward God's purposes, always a Beloved Child at any age, always looking forward to God's realm on earth.

So, is it exciting and a little scary and full of possibilities for us to be living into a new pastorate together? You bet. We are smack in the middle of *and*, the time before we really know each other and learn to support each other in our innermost desires to serve God and Creation, and the time after all the inter-

viewing, get-to-know-you gathering, and decision making about each other. It's bound to be unsettling and surprising.

It will also be a time full of loving patience with each other and hope for the best possibilities coming to light under God's call. I trust that what happens in this between time will be like sowing fertile ground together, not so that I can plant my own crops, but so that we can prepare a our patch of earth so that all who come here (whoever they are and wherever they are on life's journey) are not only welcome, but feel empowered, encouraged, and engaged to grab a trowel and get to planting.

I'm keeping a prayer for all of us in this *and* time that we will take our leaps of faith bravely and smile if we trip and stumble. We surely won't get anywhere together by standing still.

All good things,

Pastor Nikki

PS—I'll be in the office 9-4 on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays if you'd like to call and plan to see me, please do!



Ongoing Opportunities



Men's Breakfast

The Men's Breakfast group will meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday, January 7 at 8 a.m. at Mama's

Place and on January 21 at 8:15 a.m. at Auntie V's.

No-Book Book Club

This month, we are gathering for breakfast on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday, January 8 and 22. We have no agenda and no book to read! Join us at Bob Evans at 8:00 for breakfast and fun conversation!

Soup & Scripture

Pastor Nikki leads a Soup & Scripture session at Cahoots each Tuesday at 12 noon. Join us for a look at the lectionary scriptures for the next Sunday.

WordHouse

Will meet on Thursday, January 9, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the downstairs youth lounge.

Reflections:

Meets every 4th Thursday on January 23 from 6:30-7:30 p.m., downstairs in the youth lounge. Bring something inspirational to share as we reflect together.

Church Council Highlights

Church Council met on Sunday, December 8, and the following items were among those discussed/ approved/reported:

Treasurer: Reports are showing budgeted income at a loss of \$13,000 so far this year, mostly due to those who are behind in pledges, and also from the estimated income from those who don't pledge.

Stewardship Report: John French reported that 41 pledges from the November Stewardship Campaign have been received so far. An additional 13 are expected. Once the all are received, John and Bruce Andres, Treasurer, will draw up the first draft of the 2020 budget, which Council will review and pass the January 12 meeting. It will then be presented to the Congregation at the January 19 Biannual Meeting for their final approval.

The volunteer cards collected during the Stewardship Campaign are being entered into a spreadsheet. The completed list will be distributed to those who handle filling positions for various duties. (i.e. Music Director getting the names of those who want to sing in the choirs, Christian Education Director getting those who want to teach Sunday School or lead youth programs, etc.)

John French presented a report of the church's investments, after meeting with Jill Powers, Trilogy Wealth Advisors, who is handling the church's account gratis. Investments have increased 10½% this year. John F. will be forming a small ad hoc committee of church members to further review current investments and determine any possible needed changes.

Deacons' Report: Reverse Advent activities included donations of items for the Arizona Mission Trip, CAVA, Women in Transition, and Turning Point Shelter. Around Valentine's Day in February, the deacons collect socks and underwear for Crossroads. This is in place of the stuffed animals collected for the past several years at Christmas time for Crossroads, which they do not need at this time.

Christian Education: Jill Noyes has gathered and organized the teaching materials, which will be kept in the church. We have a solid assortment of Sunday School materials available. We have the children's Lectionary Bible for Year C, will purchase ones for Years A & B. We also have a book of alternative children's bulletins for various bible stories and a book of 200 Bible themed lesson plans. As in past years, Kim Couch is directing this year's Christmas Pageant – she has purchased staging sets that can be used in the coming years. Many thanks to her for organizing and putting in her time and efforts into this project which is such a meaningful part of the Christmas Eve Service.

Missions: Lois reported that the team going to Arizona will leave January 12, which is also the first Sunday for our new pastor. During the Worship Service that morning a blessing will be given to those going, with prayers for a successful trip.

Transitional Pastoral Relations: The committee approved

John P. Gardner's request for time off on Sunday, December 29. He will draft the order for the service and has arranged for David Grimm to preach, and will be coordinating with Lynn Syler about the music.

The committee approved Nikki Shaw's request to use some of her professional development funds to cover the cost of attending an IKC training on conflict resolution held at the Friedens UCC in Indianapolis, Monday-Friday, February 10-14, 2019. The training will not impact Sunday services.

The committee approved Nikki Shaw's request to take vacation time to officiate a family wedding in New Jersey Thursday-Sunday, March 12-15, 2019. She will take care of arranging for coverage for the March 15 Sunday service.

Trustees Report: The church is looking for someone to shovel the sidewalks and steps for \$25 an hour. Gasoline and equipment are provided. This person would report to the Trustees.

Welcoming: We are enjoying new visitors on most every Sunday, who are continuing to return. We look forward to welcoming them and getting to know them!

Old Business: Status of Filling Music Director Position.....The Music Search Committee is working diligently in trying to find a permanent Music Director, by posting the opening online (including on the church's Facebook page and Indeed) and placing posters in various places in



The next Council meeting will be Sunday, January 12, following worship.

and around Steuben County. If anyone knows of someone who might be interested please have them contact Dave Snyder. In the meantime, the committee considering other options until the post is filled

New Business: Angola Pride June 2020 Event Request – Renting Selman Pavilion....Since the Church is already established as a not-for-profit entity, they can get a permit to use the Selman Pavilion at a discounted rate. Angola Pride is requesting that the church purchase the permit at the discount, and Angola Pride will reimburse them, as they did last year. This was approved.

Christmas Purse to Church Staff....As in years past, Council agreed that we take up a collection for church paid staff and distribute it proportionately. It was also decided to collect for a separate farewell gift for John Gardner, in gratitude for serving so effectively and successfully as our Transitional Pastor and Teacher since last July

Submitted by Vicki Harris, Clerk.

January Birthdays and Anniversaries



2 - JoAnn Lewis
 4 - Karen Miller
 13 - Sally Welter
 14 - James Grant
 14 - Jeremy Rentz

15 - Barb Bryan
 15 - Rod Lewis
 16 - Ron Hays
 16 - Janet Weller
 17 - Patricia Brown

17 - Griffin Hine
 21 - Marilyn Newman
 24 - Bob Cablk
 29 - Liz Andres

January Volunteers

Date	Liturgist	Greeters	Children's Sermon
Jan 05	Marj Lilley	JoAnn and Rod Lewis	Celia Motz
Jan 12	Jim McEntarfer	Liz Andres and Gayle Newton	Vicki Harris
Jan 19	Jim Simons	Marj Stoudinger and Jennifer Decker Marj Lilley	Marj Lilley
Jan 26	David Syler	Gayle Newton and Deb Miller	Michelle Olson

Date	Usher	Refreshments	Counter
Jan 05	Sue Myers	Liz Andres	Jim and Lynn Simons
Jan 12	Sue Myers	Celia Motz and Sue Myers	Marj Stoudinger
Jan 19	Gary VandenElst	Jim and Lois McEntarfer	Marge Mueller
Jan 26	Sue Myers	Patti and Leslie Brown	Ralph McDowell

Upcoming in January

January 14 - FCUCC Mission Team to Arizona

January 19 - Bi-Annual Congregational Meeting

January Calendar

- 1 - New Year's Day OFFICE CLOSED
- 5 - Worship 10:00 a.m. Sanctuary, John P. Gardner's last day
 - Sunday School 10:15 a.m.
 - Nikki Shaw's Ordination 2:00 p.m. Peace UCC, FtW
- 6 - Dedecorate Building 10:00 a.m. Sanctuary, Etc.
- 7 - Men's Breakfast 8:00 a.m. Mama's Place
 - Nikki Shaw's First Day 9:00 a.m.
 - Soup & Scripture 12 noon Cahoots
- 8 - No-Book Book Club 8:00 a.m. Bob Evans
 - Bell Choir 5:45 p.m.
- 9 - WordHouse 6:30 p.m. Youth Lounge
- 11 - Cary L Baird II Funeral 2:00 p.m. Sanctuary
- 12 - Nikki Shaw's First Worship 10:00 a.m. Sanctuary
 - Sunday School 10:15 a.m.
 - Council Meets 11:30 a.m. Community Room
- 13 - Cahoots Board Meeting 11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hall
- 15 - Soup & Scripture 12 noon Cahoots
 - Women's Book Study 2:00 p.m. Pastor Deb's Office
- 15 - Bell Choir 5:45 p.m.
- 19 - Worship 10:00 a.m. Sanctuary
 - Sunday School 10:15 a.m.
 - Bi-Annual Congregational Meeting 11:15 Sanctuary
- 21 - Men's Breakfast 8:15 a.m. Auntie V's
 - Soup & Scripture 12 noon Cahoots
- 22 - No-Book Book Club 8:00 a.m. Bob Evans
 - Bell Choir 5:45 p.m.
- 23 - Reflections 6:30 p.m. Youth Lounge
- 26 - Worship 10:00 a.m. Sanctuary
 - Sunday School 10:15 a.m.
- 28 - Soup & Scripture 12 noon Cahoots
- 29 - Bell Choir 5:45 p.m.



- In the hospital in December: **Art Eberhardt, Pete Groth** and **George Weller**.
- Our sympathy to: **Norma** and **Skip Baker** at the death of their grandson **Jordan Martinez**.
- Our sympathy to **Kristy Couch** and **Heather Burkett** at the death of Kristy's father, **Gary Malcus Couch**.



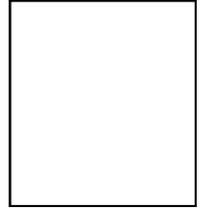
Church Refreshments 2020

The purpose of Fellowship Hour, following Sunday Worship is to get together and share conversation with each other. It is not to provide a meal, although we all enjoy the snacks. With that in mind, we are looking to **SIMPLIFY** how refreshments are provided, making it easier and less costly. So, look for a change later in January as to how refreshments will be scheduled. Folks will be placed into 8 different groups, with the "snowbirds" being dispersed evenly among them. Each group will provide refreshments approx. every two months, dropping them off in the kitchen prior to Worship. An email (phoning if needed) will be sent out at the beginning of the week asking each person/family in the assigned group to bring **just one item** for the following Sunday. No one person will be in charge of the group — and whatever arrives will be the refreshments for that Sunday. If someone happens to be ill or out of town that particular Sunday, other items donated from the group should be enough. We understand there will be no guarantees as to what will be there each Sunday. (*Think of the surprise!*) Let's give this a try and see how it goes.

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First Congregational United Church of Christ, as an inclusive and caring Christian community, welcomes into its full life and ministry persons of every race, ethnic background, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, marital status, criminal history and faith background. As we serve those within our church family, the community and the world in the name of Jesus Christ, we celebrate each person's uniqueness and look forward to the gifts they bring to us.



God is still speaking,

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



Bi-Annual Congregational Meeting

Members should plan to be present on Sunday, January 19, immediately following worship, for our Bi-Annual Congregational Meeting as we discuss and vote on the 2020 church budget proposed by Church Council!

Calendar
Marker

