



## WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 4, 2024

### THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

974 Skyline Drive SW • Rochester, MN 55902



#### “THE POWER OF GOD”

Isaiah 40:21-31

There are times in our lives, in all of our lives, when we feel ourselves to be powerless. Sometimes we are powerless to stop the spread of an illness in our bodies or the bodies of a loved one. Other times we are powerless to stem the tide of addiction or mental illness washing over us. All of us are powerless to stop the process of our own aging and our inevitable mortality. Feeling this powerlessness can be terrifying; so terrifying that we often refuse to acknowledge it. We live in denial of the reality of our powerlessness. Yet, the Christian faith makes the bold claim that when we acknowledge our powerlessness, it is precisely then that we may find access to a great power.

The prophet Isaiah, when speaking to his people during the time of their exile in Babylon, told of the transcendent, overwhelming power of God. “To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing.” So great is the power of the God who created the heavens and the earth that even the most powerful humans pale in comparison, for God “brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.” Yet as utterly transcendent as God is, the Lord chooses not to be distant from us. The all-powerful God promises to “give power to the faint, and strengthen the powerless.”

It is the promise of God to give strength to the powerless that is the source of all Christian hope. On our own, relying solely on our own power, we are like newly rooted stems blown away by the vicissitudes of life. Yet when we acknowledge our powerlessness and wait for God, it is precisely then that the power of God comes to us. “Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” I do not believe this promise guarantees us a life without suffering, but I do believe it guarantees that no matter what we face and no matter how powerless we feel, God will give us the strength we need if we but wait upon Her. Let us take heart in the knowledge of God’s abundant power and God’s promise to renew our strength in our moments of greatest need.

Rev. Andrew Greenhaw

**COMMUNION** will be served by passing of the plate. If you prefer, prepackaged Communion elements are available in the Narthex or from an usher.

**THE CARE FUND** is collected on the first Sunday of the month and is used for emergency relief for our members. Please consider making a contribution so that we may continue to respond to the emergency needs of our members during difficult times.

**CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY STAKEHOLDERS MEETING** - As we move toward a different model of organization, many of you might be wondering what our plans are for the ministry with children and youth. **This Sunday, February 4 following worship** Pastor Shannon will present on upcoming programming, share opportunities to pitch in, and take questions. Please come and see all of the good things happening with the youngest in our congregation.



## YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S CHOIRS – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**Youth Bell Choir** (6<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade) – Rehearsal on Sunday following worship: February 4, 11 & 18; ring during worship on Sunday, February 25.

**Children's Choir** (PreK-5<sup>th</sup> grade) - Rehearsal on Sunday following worship: February 25, March 3 & 10; sing during worship on Sunday, March 17.

### CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

Tue	2/6	10:00 AM	Men's Group – at church
		2:00 PM	Bible Study – Zoom
Wed	2/7	5:15 PM	Bell Choir
		6:30 PM	Youth Group
Thu	2/8	12:00 PM	Bulletin & Announcement info due
		6:30 PM	Chancel Choir
Fri	2/9	9-11 AM	Channel One Volunteer Day
Sat	2/10	6-9 PM	Parent's Night Out



**PARENT'S NIGHT OUT** - Our first fundraiser for this summer's Tucson service-learning trip is coming up! On **Saturday, February 10 from 6 to 9 PM** we will be hosting a parent's night out to raise funds for the trip. For a donation, we will feed the children, play with them and have a movie night. To help us plan, please **RSVP by using the SignUp Genius link** on our events page: [www.congoroch.org/news-events](http://www.congoroch.org/news-events).



**MARDI GRAS SUNDAY on February 11** is a time to celebrate and rejoice before we enter the penitential season of Lent. This service will include a jazz combo and beautiful spirituals sung by the choir. Let us express our joy with great music and worship and stay afterward for fun fellowship!



**THERE WILL BE A BAPTISM next Sunday, February 11. Bring water from home** in any container you wish to help us welcome **Kaylee Tarr**, daughter of Travis and Mickey Tarr, into our family of faith.



**THE ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING SPECIAL OFFERING (OGHS)** of the United Church of Christ will be **collected next Sunday, February 11**. OGHS provides us with the opportunity to be involved in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. The UCC engages in mutual partnership with churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response and recovery networks. Through this offering, you can help meet the immediate needs and address the underlying causes that create those needs for some of God's most vulnerable.



**Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:9)** If God has touched your heart to share, please write OGHS on the memo line of your check or PayPal donation (giving link on the <https://www.congoroch.org> website), or use the OGHS envelope from the sanctuary chair pockets. Your gifts DO make a difference!

**JUSTICE AND SERVICE PLANNING MEETING AND PRIDEFEST AND JUNETEENTH - On Sunday, February 11 after worship**, please join us in the Parlor/Library to discuss plans for Pridefest and Juneteenth and other upcoming events for the year. We welcome all to attend to hear of what activities interest you in serving in ways as Jesus has taught us. We are excited about the possibilities in the year to come! Please join us.



**ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP on February 14 at 6 PM** - This service that begins the Lenten Season will include the imposition of ashes which acknowledges our mortality, along with the celebration of Holy Communion in which we share in the presence of the risen Christ, our hope for eternal life. The juxtaposition of light in the darkness, and life from death make for a beautiful service and a terrific start for our Lenten journey.



**CHANNEL ONE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!** A snowstorm caused Channel One Regional Food Bank to cancel our January volunteer date, but hopefully the weather will cooperate for our next group volunteer session on **Friday, February 9, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM**. We'd love to have you join in! We usually re-pack bulk foods into smaller packages for distribution throughout the Channel One network or pack food boxes for the CSFP or the high-rise delivery programs. Volunteers must be at least 13 years old. We work hard but have fun too!

Signing up to volunteer must be done via our unique page on the Channel One volunteer site at [https://corfb.galaxydigital.com/need/detail/?need\\_id=823703](https://corfb.galaxydigital.com/need/detail/?need_id=823703). Please click on the "Respond" button to begin. If this is the first time you have volunteered, you will need to create a sign-in account first. Our sign-up page contains all the monthly dates that we have scheduled, so you can sign up for as many as you'd like at one time. For more information, please contact Cheryl Roediger at [cnroediger@gmail.com](mailto:cnroediger@gmail.com).



**SERVE A MEAL TO OUR NEIGHBORS AT THE LANDING** – More dates have been added for the opportunity to serve a provided meal at the Landing from **4:30–7:00 PM**: February 15, March 5, 14, 21, April 4, 11, 19 and 25. Pastor Shannon or Andrew will be there, and 3 more people can sign up for each evening. Please use the SignUp Genius link on our events page: [www.congoroch.org/news-events](http://www.congoroch.org/news-events).

**IMMIGRATION THEN AND NOW IN SE MN - Thursday, February 15 from 7-8:30 PM at the History Center of Olmsted County.** Join Phil Wheeler of Southeastern Minnesota Interfaith Immigrant Legal Defense at the History Center February 15, 2024, in a discussion on the history of immigration in our region. This fact-filled and interesting talk will focus on the benefits to our region and the legal challenges faced by immigrants navigating the current immigration system. This is an excellent opportunity for those going to Tucson this summer to learn more of the complexities related to immigration here in Minnesota. RSVP to Pastor Shannon. Tickets are \$5.

**ADULT EDUCATION AFTER WORSHIP ON FEBRUARY 18** - Diane and Thomas Haines with the MN Conference UCC Immigration Team will be with us to share their experiences and current issues related to immigration. One of the most significant global issues in our lifetime is the pressure on masses of people to move across borders. Come listen to Thom and Diane Haines as they share about their recent trips to the border lands (Mexico/Arizona and Thom's trip to Honduras). The experiences and information they share can bring about a call to action and help prepare you to speak in an informed way into the mistruths about asylum seekers.

**SPRING CHURCH LIFE DEADLINE** - Articles and upcoming events for Spring Church Life (March-May) are due to Sarah at [church@congoroch.org](mailto:church@congoroch.org) by **Monday, February 19**.

**BOOK GROUP** meets the 3rd Tuesday at 10:30 AM at church, plus a Zoom option for those who wish to join us from home. Book selection for **February 20** is "Our Woman in Moscow" by Beatriz Williams and is available in the office.



**WE ARE GOING SKATING!** EVERYONE is invited to come skate or just spend some time in fellowship together on **Saturday, February 17 from 5:30-6:30 PM at the Rec Center** (21 Elton Hills Drive NW). Friends and children of all ages are welcome. Skate rentals and rink costs have been paid by the church. You are invited to bring snacks or drinks to share. When you enter the main entrance check in at the front desk and they will point you to the proper rink.



**WE WILL HAVE A SOUP AND SALAD POTLUCK** following worship on **Sunday, February 25**. Everyone is invited to bring a crock pot of their favorite soup or a salad to share. The church will provide drinks, bread, and cookies. If you know what you will be bringing, please use the sign-up on our church website event page: [www.congoroch.org/news-events](http://www.congoroch.org/news-events).

<b>MONTHLY OFFERING REPORT</b>		<u>2023 Actual</u>	<u>2024 Actual</u>	<u>2024 Budget</u>
January	Estimate of Giving	* \$41,096	* \$78,056	\$22,051
	Non-Estim. Giving	\$875	\$695	\$2,083
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$41,971</b>	<b>\$78,751</b>	<b>\$24,134</b>
Y-T-D	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$41,971</b>	<b>\$78,751</b>	<b>\$24,134</b>

\* Includes pre-paid pledges made in previous year



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February 11, 2024

## THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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**THERE WILL ALSO BE A BAPTISM as part of the worship service. Please bring water from home** in any container you wish to help us welcome **Kaylee Tarr**, daughter of Travis and Mickey Tarr, into our family of faith.



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**JUSTICE AND SERVICE PLANNING MEETING FOLLOWING WORSHIP TODAY.** Please join us in the Parlor/Library to discuss plans for Pridefest and Juneteenth and other upcoming events for the year. We welcome all to attend to hear of what activities interest you in serving in ways as Jesus has taught us. We are excited about the possibilities in the year to come!

**OUR 2024 LENTEN DEVOTIONAL** - This Lenten season, we will participate in Jesus' 40 days of being "tested in the wilderness" by walking with C.S. Lewis, leaning into the power of literature to provoke thought and inspire action. With humor, wit, and imagination, Lewis explores an array of familiar, everyday struggles - and thereby helps us chart a way forward, into the delight and renewal of Easter morning and beyond.

Copies of the Lenten Devotional and the book "The Screwtape Letters," are available to pick up in the Narthex starting this Sunday. Pastors Andrew and Shannon will be sharing reflections on the week's devotion in our weekly emails throughout the season of Lent. Grab yourself a copy of the devotional and the book and join our congregation on this Lenten journey!

### CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

Tue	2/13	2:00 PM	Bible Study - Zoom
Wed	2/14	5:15 PM	Bell Choir
		6:00 PM	Ash Wednesday service
		-----	NO Youth Group
Thu	2/15	12:00 PM	Bulletin & Announcement info due
		4:30 PM	Serve Meal at The Landing
		6:30 PM	Chancel Choir
Sat	2/17	5:30 PM	Ice Skating at the Rec Center

**ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14 AT 6 PM** - This service that begins the Lenten Season will include the imposition of ashes which acknowledges our mortality, along with the celebration of Holy Communion in which we share in the presence of the risen Christ, our hope for eternal life.



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**SERVE A MEAL TO OUR NEIGHBORS AT THE LANDING** - More dates have been added for the opportunity to serve a provided meal at the Landing from **4:30-7:00 PM**: February 15, March 5, 14, 21, April 4, 11, 19 and 25. Pastor Shannon or Andrew will be there, and 3 more people can sign up for each evening. Please use the SignUp Genius link on our events page: [www.congoroch.org/news-events](http://www.congoroch.org/news-events).



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**ADULT EDUCATION ON IMMIGRATION & BORDER ISSUES - After Sunday worship on February 18,** Diane and Thomas Haines with the MN Conference UCC Immigration Team will be with us to share their experiences and current issues related to immigration. One of the most significant global issues in our lifetime is the pressure on masses of people to move across borders. Come listen to Thom and Diane Haines as they share about their recent trips to the border lands (Mexico/Arizona and Thom's trip to Honduras). The experiences and information they share can bring about a call to action and help prepare you to speak in an informed way into the mistruths about asylum seekers.

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## WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 18, 2024

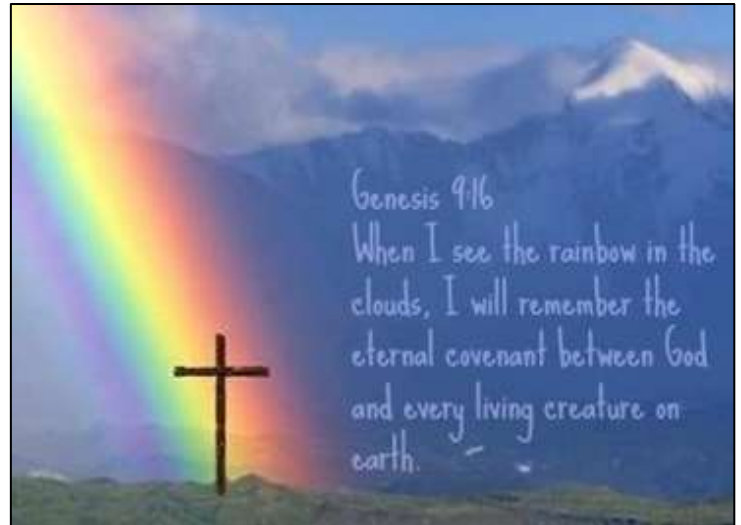
### THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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#### “THE BREADTH OF GOD’S LOVE” Genesis 9:8-17

During the season of Lent, we focus on repentance and renewal- on naming the ways we have fallen short of our baptismal vows and renewing our commitment to following Christ. One way we fail to live into our baptism is by failing to appreciate the radical and total nature of baptism. We have a tendency to think of baptism as intended only for a few, for those whose parents were Christians, those who regularly attend church. We also have a tendency to think that only certain parts of ourselves are really known and claimed by God, as though our baptism only washed a part of us and God’s covenant was made only with a portion of souls.



After the water recedes from the great flood, God says to Noah, “When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” This story reminds us of the universal nature of God’s loving concern. The flood washed away the sin of the earth, just as baptism washes away our old lives. And just as we enter into the new covenant through baptism, so too did God make a covenant with every living creature on the earth following the flood. God’s loving concern was never limited just to the people of Israel- it has always included all the creatures of the earth. Nor is God’s loving concern today only for those presently within the church- God loves every living being. God intends for all people to be reconciled in the love of God and to know the joy of salvation.

Just as we believe that God’s love extends to every person and every creature upon the earth, so too do we believe that God’s love extends to every portion of our very selves, every hidden corner of our souls. There is no part of you that God does not claim and love. There is no part of you that is beyond God’s power to love and redeem. You are God’s beloved child. May we trust in the comprehensive nature of God’s love and may we allow God’s light to shine on every portion of our soul during this Lenten season.

Pastor Andrew Greenhaw

**Communion** will be served by intinction. If you prefer, prepackaged Communion elements are available in the Narthex or from an usher.

**ADULT EDUCATION ON IMMIGRATION & BORDER ISSUES – Following worship**, Diane and Thomas Haines with the MN Conference UCC Immigration Team will be with us to share their experiences and current issues related to immigration. One of the most significant global issues in our lifetime is the pressure on masses of people to move across borders. Come listen to Thom and Diane Haines as they share about their recent trips to the border lands (Mexico/Arizona and Thom’s trip to Honduras). The experiences and information they share can bring about a call to action and help prepare you to speak in an informed way into the mistruths about asylum seekers.

## CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

Mon	2/19	12:00 PM	Spring Church Life deadline
Tue	2/20	7:30 AM	Men's Group - Denny's N.
		10:30 AM	Book Group - Hybrid
		2:00 PM	Bible Study - Zoom
Wed	2/21	5:15 PM	Bell Choir
		6:30 PM	Youth Group
Thu	2/22	12:00 PM	Bulletin & Announcement info due
		6:30 PM	Chancel Choir

**SPRING CHURCH LIFE  
DEADLINE -**  
Articles and upcoming events for Spring Church Life (March-May) are due to Sarah at [church@congoroch.org](mailto:church@congoroch.org) by **Monday, February 19.**



**NEXT SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25, WE WILL HAVE A SOUP AND SALAD POTLUCK** following worship. Everyone is invited to bring a crock pot of their favorite soup or a salad to share. The church will provide drinks, bread, and cookies. If you know what you will be bringing, please use the sign-up on our church website event page: [www.congoroch.org/news-events](http://www.congoroch.org/news-events).

**OUR 2024 LENTEN DEVOTIONAL** - This Lenten season, we will participate in Jesus' 40 days of being "tested in the wilderness" by walking with C.S. Lewis, leaning into the power of literature to provoke thought and inspire action. With humor, wit, and imagination, Lewis explores an array of familiar, everyday struggles - and thereby helps us chart a way forward, into the delight and renewal of Easter morning and beyond.

Copies of the Lenten Devotional and the book "The Screwtape Letters," are now available to pick up in the Narthex. Pastors Andrew and Shannon will be sharing reflections on the week's devotion in our weekly emails throughout the season of Lent. Grab yourself a copy of the devotional and the book and join our congregation on this Lenten journey!



### YOUTH BELLS AND CHILDREN'S CHOIRS

**Youth Bell Choir** (6<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade) - Sunday, February 25 rehearsal before worship and ring during morning service.

**Children's Choir** (PreK-5<sup>th</sup> grade) - Rehearsal on Sunday following worship: February 25, March 3 & 10; sing during worship on Sunday, March 17.

**BOOK GROUP** meets on the 3rd Tuesday at 10:30 AM at church, plus a Zoom option for those who wish to join us from home. Book selection for **February 20** is "Our Woman in Moscow" by Beatriz Williams and is available in the church office.

**SERVE A MEAL TO OUR NEIGHBORS AT THE LANDING** - More dates have been added for the opportunity to serve a provided meal at the Landing from **4:30-7:00 PM:** March 5, 14, 21, April 4, 11, 19 and 25. Pastor Shannon or Andrew will be there, and 3 more people can sign up for each evening. Please use the SignUp Genius link on our events page: [www.congoroch.org/news-events](http://www.congoroch.org/news-events).



**THANK YOU TO CHANNEL ONE VOLUNTEERS!** Many thanks to the 8 people who were the crew for our Food Bank group volunteer session on February 9: Janet Bartz; Ellen Bolterman; Annie Kramer; John and LuAnn Nicholson; Bob and Cheryl Roediger; and David Walters.

First, we checked **480 boxes** already packed for the USDA-sponsored Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and added a required package of beef stew if one was not already there. After a short break, we finished processing a pallet of cups of green beans: putting 4 eight-ounce cups in a bag, 12 bags in a box, for a **total of 27.5 boxes or 1,320 cups**. The CSFP boxes will be distributed to the program's participants, and the green bean boxes have been added to the Food Bank's inventory for use throughout Channel One's 14 county service area.

Our next group session is **Friday, March 8 from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM**. You can sign-up on our church website event page: [www.congoroch.org/news-events](http://www.congoroch.org/news-events). Come join us!



# WEEKLY BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 25, 2024

## THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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**ON THIS SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT**, Pastor Shannon Smith's message is "Take Up Your Cross" from the scripture reading Mark 8:31-38.

**REMINDER - Youth Bell Choir** will rehearse before worship and ring during morning service. **Children's Choir** will rehearse following worship this Sunday, February 25, March 3 & 10; and sing during worship on Sunday, March 17.



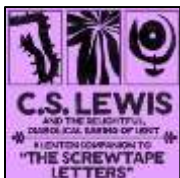
**JOIN US AFTER WORSHIP FOR A SOUP AND SALAD POTLUCK!** Everyone is invited to bring a crock pot of their favorite soup or a salad to share. The church will provide drinks, bread, and cookies. If you know what you will be bringing, please use the sign-up on our church website event page: [www.congoroch.org/news-events](http://www.congoroch.org/news-events).



**MASKS AVAILABLE** - As Covid and flu season is upon us, masks will be available in the Narthex. We ask that if you feel sick, please worship from home. Whatever makes you most comfortable, please do.

### CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

Tue	2/27	2:00 PM	Bible Study - Zoom
Wed	2/28	5:15 PM	Bell Choir
		6:30 PM	Youth Group
Thu	2/29	12:00 PM	Bulletin & Announcement info due
		6:30 PM	Chancel Choir



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Copies of the Lenten Devotional and the book "The Screwtape Letters" are available to pick up in the Narthex. Pastors Andrew and Shannon will be sharing reflections on the week's devotion in weekly emails throughout the season of Lent. Grab yourself a copy and join our congregation on this Lenten journey!

**ADULT EDUCATION NEXT SUNDAY, MARCH 3 - How to Talk to Kids About God.** How do we inspire a passion in our children about God and their own spiritual lives? It can often feel like the "old" way of talking about God constructs a divine that is male, punishing, and angry rather than a loving God who is beyond human categories and is always seeking us out. Join Pastor Shannon as we talk about how to talk to kids about God in a way that encourages wonder and awe and to consider the importance of spiritual formation in our youngest.



**EASTER LILIES** will grace the Sanctuary on Easter Sunday, March 31. If you'd like to order a plant at a pre-paid cost of \$14, you can include your payment with dedication in Sunday's offering plate OR contact Sarah Struwe at [church@congoroch.org](mailto:church@congoroch.org) or call 289-4581. Your dedication may be in memory of, in celebration of, or in honor of someone. After the Easter service they will be delivered to our members who are not able to worship with us in church. **Final date to order is Friday, March 15.**





**WORSHIP & CARE ASSOCIATE – Jodi Williamson**

[worshipcare@congoroch.org](mailto:worshipcare@congoroch.org) and (507)-269-4177

I am honored to be serving as the new Worship & Care Associate for our Church. I will be assisting Pastor Andrew and Pastor Shannon with worship planning and the ministry of fellowship and care. Within the next month or so, we will be conducting a Talent and Time Survey to ask each of you how you can share your talents with the church, as much or as little as you like.

As we gather this information, some of your members need some helping hands. There is a need for prepared meals. We are also looking for folks that can help with rides to church and various appointments. If you can help with meals or rides, please let me know.

**Our next Care Team meeting will be Saturday, March 9 at 11 AM.** We have members who would enjoy your companionship and conversation. If interested to learn more, please join us. There will be coffee and donuts!

I look forward to working with everyone as we bring our own unique gifts to serve God and our Church Community.

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**THANK YOU** - Our annual One Great Hour of Sharing offering totaled **\$983** this year. By sharing the light of God's love with your gift, you are helping the United Church of Christ engage in immediate disaster relief, refugee and immigration issues, and development ministries aimed at the long-term recovery of the most vulnerable of God's children. **THANK YOU!** Your gifts **DO** make a difference!



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**BOOK GROUP** meets on the 3rd Tuesday at 10:30 AM at church, plus a Zoom option for those who wish to join us from home. Book selection for **March 19** is “Rochester” by Wright-Peterson and is available in the church office.