

The Messenger

NEW COVENANT

COMMUNITY CHURCH

A WEST AKRON NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH

The President's Page

June
2023

Greetings Everyone,

I want to talk to you about FIT. No, I'm not referring to the eight-year-old Honda that I drive but rather an innovative program out of Pittsburg Theological Seminary to help us come to terms with the fact that we cannot be the same church we have always been. With our Governing Board's okay we, along with several other Akron area Presbyterian churches have been working and meeting monthly with marvelous folks from Pittsburg Theological Seminary to reimagine New Covenant Community Church in our neighborhood. Shelley Koutnik's article lays out where we are now.

I also want to direct your attention to Phil Smith's splendid explanation of how, with Mission's guidance, we carefully make donations to deserving organizations to spread hope, cheer, and God's love.

Also keep in mind that on July 2nd, Reverend Bradley Rito and his wife Katie will be joining as our new pastor. Plan on a reception for them immediately following worship.

Much affection,
Nancy Clem,
Governing Board President



NCCC & FIT

Your Faith Innovation Team, FIT, the innovative program out of Pittsburg Theological Seminary to help us come to terms with the fact that we cannot be the same church we have always been, began mid-August 2022. By walking and driving we surveyed homes, businesses, parks, senior and disability housing, four elementary schools, and 10 churches of varying denominations. Currently, the Mission Committee works with two of those elementary schools, Case and Portage Path. We also have relationships that extend beyond the neighborhood with connections to Gennesaret, Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank, Akron Area Interfaith Council (AAIC) and Akron Interfaith Immigration Advocates (AIIA). Then we looked at who we are. NCCC has innovative worship services, widely attended fellowship events and is

(FIT continued on page 2)



mission oriented.

You, our congregation, helped create a timeline identifying the joys and disappointments we have experienced. Next, we examined all the information and started exploring ways to expand and deepen our existing relationships in a way that is consistent with our gifts and concerns. The opportunity came to us while our Mission Committee and volunteers were working at the Portage Path CLC Book Fair.

Portage Path needs volunteers, and they can use our assistance in:

- 1) **Akron Reads Initiative** – Volunteer tutors are needed to read to second graders. Training is provided via video. The Board of Education requires a background check, which is free to the volunteer. Ideally volunteers will commit to 1 hour per week for the school year (October through May). Portage Path CLC is willing to accept volunteers who will commit to 1 hour per week for 9 weeks.

If you are willing to make the commitment, please let a FIT member know.

(Background checks are completed

during the summer.)

- 2) **Family Events** – These events are held at the end of the school day, once or twice per month. Our volunteers are needed to help pack “goody bags” and assist with distribution or other event activities. Most events are no more than 1 to 2 hours. Your FIT packed “Goody Bags” on May 18 and again on May 23.

This is a fun way to do something beneficial for the families and students at Portage Path. Watch for more information in the fall.

- 3) **Student Needs Closet** – There is an on going need for toiletries and basic clothing for the fourth and fifth graders; specifically, the boys need deodorant and the girls need feminine care products. We will learn more about these needs in the fall.

Please prayerfully consider how you might contribute to this ministry. If you have any questions, please contact a FIT member. Your FIT is Nancy Clem, Betsy Davis, Hal Horton, Tom and Shelley Koutnik, and Nancy Williams. Thank you for supporting NCCC and the many mission and outreach activities.

- Shelley Koutnik

MINUTE FOR MISSION

A big thank you to all who worked at the Case Book Fair on May 16. Another very successful book fair and some very happy and grateful children who will have reading material for their summer break!!!! Kuddos to Jaci Chetelat for

organizing this mission which has become a tradition for our church!!!

Please check out some of the many Thank-you notes along with pictures from Case CLC outside the sanctuary in the hallway!

-Margie Frlich



HURRICANES AND HUNGER

Where do our disaster relief offerings go? This is a brief description of the channels through which our offerings get to their intended destinations.

Every year disaster strikes somewhere in the world where people's lives are shattered. When a disaster strikes, as it did this past winter in Florida or will this week with a cyclone in the far east, the churches of North America will respond with disaster relief.

As a congregation, our contribution to those appeals takes two forms. We can send our support directly to the site of the disaster as we did a few months ago with the Peace Community congregation in Ft. Myers Beach, Florida, or we can pool our support with hundreds of other congregations through our two denominational affiliates, the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. and the International Council of Community Churches.

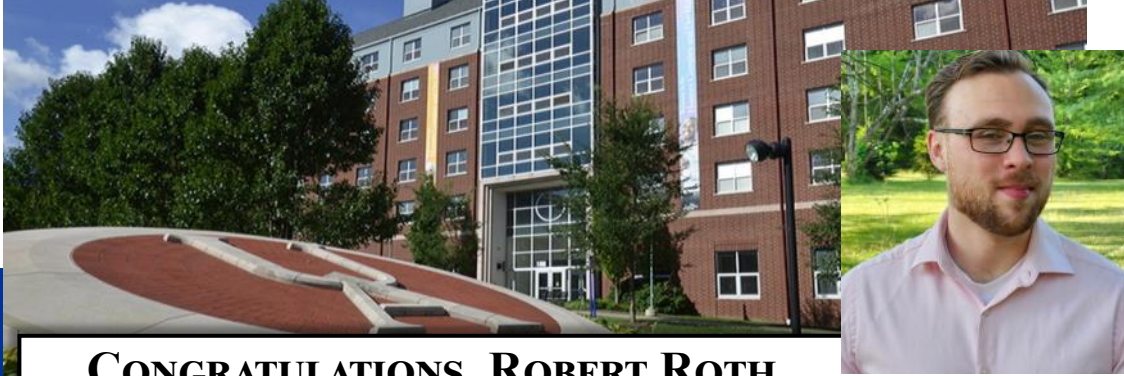
Both the P.C.U.S.A. and the I.C.C.C. are partners in Church World Service, the primary resource for disaster relief of 37 Protestant and Orthodox Churches in North America. When our disaster relief offering is sent to either Church it becomes part of an even greater effort which has access to hundreds of resources and thousands of experts. The only way to be effective in the face of a disaster is with people who know what to do. And, the ecumenical church has the ability, with our

support, to do just that: to purchase the supplies and expertise that will best serve the people whose lives are shattered by these disasters.

Finally, a brief history of Church World Service and the one disaster that never ends. That disaster is hunger! Everywhere in the world there are people who need food. The roots of Church World Service were planted in the heart of the Great Depression to meet that need. Grain farmers from the American Midwest founded what was called the Christian Rural Overseas Program (C.R.O.P.). They would offer the grain if the Churches across America would raise the money to ship and distribute their offering. C.R.O.P. is still at work today, supplying food across this country and around the world. The C.R.O.P. walk in Akron was the predecessor to the Hunger Walks which provided such a vital resource to the Akron Canton Regional Foodbank.

So, the short answer to the question, "Where does our disaster relief offering go?" is through the wider Church, at work together, it becomes part of a larger sum assembled by the P.C.U.S.A. and the I.C.C.C., collected to meet each and every disaster wherever it might occur.

- Phil Smith



CONGRATULATIONS, ROBERT ROTH

Neither a once in a century pandemic nor a life-changing medical diagnosis deterred Robert Roth from reaching his goal. He graduated last month with his bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Akron.

Robert's most memorable college experience was spending three days in the ICU of a small mid-Ohio hospital where he was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. The event necessitated a move back to Akron but also gave him the opportunity to get acquainted with the excellent law school in his proverbial backyard, which now figures prominently in his plans for the future.

If Robert has a superpower, it is the ability to attract good friends and colleagues. It was they who conveyed him to the hospital during his medical crisis and it is they who kept him focused on positive ventures. He counts budding engineers, software designers, entrepreneurs, and property developers of various ethnicities among his "band of brothers."

Robert worked throughout his college career. He tried out a variety of jobs, some requiring mostly brawn and others relying principally on brains. He was a landscaping assistant, a JCPenney retail associate, NCCC's official valet, and an intern for Akron Municipal Judge David Hamilton. Although he retains a few valued groundskeeping clients who pay well and on time, he has settled on less physically-demanding pursuits for his future.

In August, Robert will be taking his place among the University of Akron's law school students. He is hoping to specialize in contract law especially as it applies to software licensing and employment practices. The Akron courthouse, where he is now employed as a paid intern, has graciously offered to work around his school schedule during the academic year. If your arraignment or small claim takes you down to High Street, please stop in and say Hi. He'll be waiting on you.

- Jackie Roth

COFFEE HOUR

The Hortons will bring treats for Coffee Hour

Upcoming Services

June 11—Rev. Jay Schmidt will return to NCCC to lead service.

June 18—NCCC will worship at **Allenside Presbyterian**
410 Rexford St..

This joint service will also be a celebration for Fiona Coughlin, who is graduating high school.



BIBLE STUDY

The doors are open for Bible Study here at 1587 W. Exchange, every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome. If you are not able to attend in person, you can find them [Facebook](#).



FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITY

Thursday, June 22, our annual night at Porthouse Theater, will once again occur. *A Funny thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* is the

play, which begins at 8:00 p.m. A potluck dinner begins at 6:30. This year, we'll be under the covered pavilion. The sign-up sheet is on the hall table. The cost is \$27/ person. Make the check out to Jackie Horton who is arranging for the tickets. Please sign up to bring an item. Plates, napkins, plastic ware, wine and chicken from Chik-Fil-A will be provided. Bring any other beverage you want or buy it there. Please remember to bring your own serving utensils. (Friendly suggestion—since we will be in the pavilion, we won't have quite as much room to spread out the food, so place your food item in a smaller container.)

Jackie Horton is in charge with Nancy Williams assisting. (Note: At this time we have no organized Fellowship Committee. People just get together to plan an event.)



A NIGHT

AT THE MUSEUM

On Saturday, May 20, Ken & Heidi Heischman along with Nancy & Ken Williams and several from AAIC “played” at the Akron Children’s Museum. Oh, we also helped set up, move tables, and clean up the pizza on the tables, and interacted with the kids. There were about 90 people in the one-parent-per-family group that was invited by the Catholic Commission of Summit County. The Akron Interfaith Immigration Advocates (AIIA) appreciated our efforts as well as the \$200 our Mission Committee donated to help cover food and admissions.



MITZVAH DAY

June 2-4

This well-planned event by several congregations in the area that Cathy King and Nancy Williams discussed a few weeks ago looks to be especially informative this year. You have been invited to sign up online with assistance from Cathy King. Lots of opportunities to work on a project or two both days and to join on Sunday for two outstanding programs in the afternoon—What You Can do About Gun Violence and the Reading Crisis for Children and How You Can Help. A free supper follows the last program beginning at 5 at Temple Israel.

Click the [hands](#) to register.



AAIC Meeting

Tuesday, June 5
12:00 p.m.

The Islamic Society of
Akron & Kent
152 E Steels Corners Rd,
Cuyahoga Falls

HUNGER WALK TOTALS

The May 7 Hunger Walk was very successful with approximately 140-150 walkers and donations totaling over \$14,000 which shot up to \$18,000 quickly with more due to arrive in another week. Our church handed in a check for \$3240, which included \$300 from Missions. In addition, another \$30 was recorded at the walk. Also, there was a brief match the middle of April. A contribution of \$100 was doubled, which brought our total to \$3470! Way to go, NCCC. We'll participate again next year on May 5, for the 15th Annual AAIC Hunger Walk. This will be a big deal.



MISSION GARDEN UPDATE

A huge thank you to all who helped finish getting our Mission Garden planted today (5/26)!

Here are a few pics of our finished work.



While the Mission Garden is just getting started, last week the irises were in full bloom. Since NCCC worshipped at Westminster, Tim Meyer shared these pics.



COFFEE HOUR

Jackie Horton will bring something for coffee hour, so that congregants can celebrate Robert Roth's graduation from the University of Akron.

There will be no July Coffee Hour, but there will be a reception after church for Rev. Brad and Katie Rito, in Fellowship Hall. Nancy Williams is coordinating this and would like a few volunteers. There will not be a sign up sheet. Just call or text her in the coming weeks. Her cell number is 330.388.0955.

There are no plans to have Coffee Hour in August, but reconvene in the fall.

WORSHIP CALENDAR

Here is the current calendar of who will be leading Worship Services for the month of June

June 4—Rev. Jim Bane

June 11—Rev. Jay Schmidt

June 18—Rev. Jim Bane

May 28—Joint Service at Allenside Presbyterian Church

**WORSHIP
COMMITTEE
MEETING
Monday, June 5
4:00 p.m.**

PREPARING FOR A NEW PASTOR

In the article "[7 Suggestions for Welcoming New Pastors](#)", the number one suggestion is *Pray for your new pastor*. As Rev. Bradley Rito and his wife, Katie, prepare to move to Akron, they are trying to sell their home. So, please keep that in mind during your daily devotional.

Hopefully, everyone has or plans to send a welcome message to the Ritos. (That's number two in the article that Hal Horton shared with the Governing Board.) To keep from bombarding his inbox with emails the board has suggested the following timeline.

Congregants with last names beginning in **A-C** (which is just over two pages of the church directory) please send a welcome message, if you haven't already done so.

Congregants with last names beginning with **D – L**, please send a message between **May 21 – June 3**.

Then, congregants with last names beginning with **M-W**, please send a message between **June 4 – June 17**.

Here's the link to [7 Suggestions for Welcoming New Pastors](#), so you can read the other suggestions.

Here's Rev. Rito's e-mail address—
rev.bwrito@gmail.com.

Here's their mailing address—
290 Holiday Island Dr., Holiday Island, AR 72631.

When you write your note, please keep it positive, and do not itemize personal expectations or agendas.



The Pentecost Offering connects us with children, youth and young adults — each with gifts to share — and offers them opportunities to build a solid foundation of faith to last a lifetime. Please make your donation by Sunday, June 4th.

**The 73rd Annual Conference of the
International Council of Community Churches
will be held at
Embassy Suites Charlotte, NC (4800 S. Tryon St.)
July 18– 21, 2023**

[Adult Registration](#)- \$230



Dr. Jones will deliver sermons on the opening day of the conference and on Thursday. On Wednesday and Friday Dr. Jones will be with us for a one hour “Q, A and Comment” session.

Rev. Dr. Clifford Jones, Sr. is this year’s keynote speaker. He will proclaim the conference theme, “We Are Family,” rooted in the Word of God as found in I



[2023 Annual Conference Bible Study Leader, Shane Claiborne!](#)

Shane Claiborne is a prominent speaker, activist, and best-selling author. Shane worked with Mother Teresa in Calcutta, and founded The Simple Way in Philadelphia. He heads up Red Letter Christians, a group that is committed to living “as if Jesus meant the things he said.”



[On the Right Track](#)

Conferees will be able to choose a TRACK that will enable them to focus on: FELLOWSHIP, WORSHIP, MISSION or EDUCATION.

Each conferee will be asked to choose a TRACK focused on your primary interest to be followed during the conference. (You are welcome to attend any of the classes.) The FELLOWSHIP track offers fellowship building activities and workshops.

Those on the EDUCATION TRACK will find themselves immersed in activities like a book study and discussion, conversation with the Bible study leader, and workshops that educate you on a variety of topics.

By following the MISSION TRACK, you’ll experience “hands on” mission opportunities along with workshops and presentations from and about our ICCC mission partner.

Those on the WORSHIP TRACK will experience “Keynote Conversations” with our worship preacher, Dr. Clifford Jones; worship through music and workshops about improving, planning and doing worship in your church setting.

The new structure is a product of a mandate from the Board of Directors to “Reform, Reframe and Re-Vision” the conference experience. The structure is evolving and, as with everything new and different, there will be “growing pains,” imperfections, needs for “tweaking” and ongoing revisions. Please be patient as the new structure takes its shape and form. Your constructive criticisms and suggestions will be welcomed, considered, and, if appropriate, implemented.

Check out Charlottesgotalot.com for tourism and travel information. Their “[Show your Badge](#)” program offers attendees deals and discounts throughout the city.