

THE CARILLON



SCRIPTURE LESSONS

- April 5 Matthew 28: 1-10
 “No Fear, New Life Begins”
- April 12 John 20: 19-23
 “New Beginnings”
- April 19 Luke 24: 13-25
 “The Danger of Expectations”
- April 26 John 10: 1-10
 “The Shepherd’s Door”

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF CLARIDON

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APRIL 2026

5 Easter Sunday



12 11:30 am Bicentennial committee meeting

11:30 am Deacons meeting

13 7:00 pm Trustees meeting

19 11:30 am Cabinet meeting

21 5:00 pm Claridon Community Helps dinner

Each Sunday: Worship 10:00 am

Each Wednesday:

Bible Study & Book Discussion 1:00 pm
Choir Practice 5:30 pm
Bell Choir 6:30 pm

Each Thursday: Bible Study 6:30 pm

“Planting and Blooming” ref: Phil 4:11-13

Every year seasons come and seasons go. As global warming continues and our weather patterns change, sometimes quite drastically within hours, we wonder and marvel at the abrupt changes. We often wonder how life will continue. Many of us struggle to understand how we are going to live, let alone thrive, through the drastic changes we are experiencing in today's world. We have things like the weather that seems to have a personality all of its own that in human form, needs medicating. We have foods that seem to be created out of things we aren't sure how they are affecting us biochemically. We have environmental influences that are known to alter the human construction of DNA and overall health. The list goes on and technology is helping the planting and spreading of global transmission of such factors into all the human race. What is it and how is it we are farming the human society in today's world?

All living things are interdependent upon one another. Each of us needs the same elements and care for growth and survival, for thriving, maturing and development. It is our universal unifying point. God made us this way. So in this connecting point as we reflect upon life and the seasons we each live through, reflecting upon the activity of planting comes to the surface this time of year. We are in the season of spring and in springtime, we plant. Planting is symbolic in many ways. It is also a necessary basic need for survival and new life hope and promises. How so?

Have you ever planted something? What does it feel like when the plant fails to grow and dies? What does it feel like if it starts to bloom and thrive? It is even more noticeable when it is floundering to live and we take and rescue it and nurture it back to life. Some say we have a green thumb when this happens. The sense of accomplishment at being able to help save something from death is tremendous. This feat fills us with a sense of gratitude and accomplishment, purpose and fulfillment. This is probably where the saying of “dirt therapy” comes from. Also the saying, “grow (bloom) where you are planted” comes from. As God has created us and life, so too, when we co-create with God, we find the love of life at the prospect of healing and rebirth.

This planting season may continue to reflect upon our meaning and participation is what it means to be co-creators with God and living through the seasons of life year after year. The cycle of life is here for us to live and build upon for the continuation of nurturing life and bringing in the new life God continually offers. In this light the recognition of ownership and participation gardening in the life of the Lord is essential. Each of us is continually planting, seeding and reseeding life in one way or another throughout our days. None of us goes without making an impact on growth. We are living. This means we are contributing to the eco system in which we are a part of. So it is important to ask: Are we consciously practicing and caring for ourselves by growing where we are planted at this time? Do we look to Christ and allow God to use us to plant healing plants among us even when we are in the dirt trying to sprout up into the light? All of us have challenges and there are times we need a little warmth to break forward into new life. It is in such times where we are reminded of the scriptures to offer hope in all seasons of life. May we prayerfully consider how it is we are planting and living for the glory of our Lord who created us in each season of our lives. May we consider the types of plants we cultivate and plant this growing season and the maintaining and nurturing of the life cycles we find ourselves in. May peace, health and joy fill our hearts as we claim the Word of the Lord into our lives.

Phil 4:11-13 **11** Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned, in whatever situation I am, to be content. **12** I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. **13** I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Your Pastor,
Julie ☺



PRAYER LIST

Doris Wilson
Bree Ellis Banks
June Webb Hunt
Joyce Vargo
Dale Baptie
Rick Juhasz
Wayne Streble
Kelly Wagner
Joe Berninger
Lee McCurry
Scott Pricer
Don and Marilyn Hornak
Karen Baptie

Sharon Hunter
Beth Christian Sharp
Kevin Playman
Denny Bihary
Thomas Woods
Rheta Crowley
Gary Branstein
Jeffery Przybysz
Ben Armstrong
Kevin Reed
Ellen Bonner
Ted Ogle
Leslie and Lowell Taylor

AWARDS

Thank you to Sara Christian Hamrick, & Jim Sebor. We met on March 31st to determine the 6 Awardees (winners). We hope to postal mail status letters to all **16 applicants** by April 15, 2026. Once all applicants reply by email acknowledging they received their letter, we will announce the Awardees (winners) names in our church Sunday bulletin. We hope the congregation will come to the **May 3rd Awards Ceremony** during our church service and brief reception following so you can meet and congratulate the Awardees. ~ Roberta Ricco

BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

The first meeting of the committee went very well. Lots of people brought ideas and reminders of what had been done at previous other "birthday" celebrations.

We seem to settle on having the celebration spread over two weekends, probably in the fall of 2027. One being an open house. open to the community. with a display of pictures and memorabilia from years past. Although all were invited to our "grand re-opening" I am sure it kept the community and even some far away members from attending since it was held in January.

Talked about re-doing the cemetery walk. a dinner with entertainment after and of course a special Thanksgiving service. Inviting the community, all past and current members and past pastors.

I would like to form several sub-committees with opportunities for everyone to participate. Pick an event, pick what you are good at etc....

Laura Christian volunteered to develop a T-shirt for the event. We need ideas for souvenirs, magnets etc, We will be developing a survey for the congregation. Also we would love momentos of past events, and pictures. I only found one picture of lifting the church to put the basement in. Surely there are more.... Do you remember the crosses, or the coloring book? The next meeting is Sunday April 12 after church at 11:30am. Note there will be a change in our meeting room. We will meet in the downstairs Sunday School room, Deacons are meeting upstairs. Thank you, Susan

MISSIONS

Thank you to all who supported our March tissue collection for the Burton Food Pantry. We collected 78 boxes of tissues! For the month of April, they are requesting canned ready to eat meals of pasta, stew, etc.

We will also support the Geauga Next Step Program which supports young adults most often coming out of the foster program and traumatic situations and are homeless or at-risk for homelessness. They provide housing and basic support as they continue their education or enter the work force. We can help by supplying paper products, personal hygiene products, laundry detergent and \$20.00 gift cards for gas or groceries.

Please place items for Next Step on the bench in the library and give any gift cards to a member of the Missions Committee (Linda McBean, Pam Plott, Jill Kellogg or Carane Ladd).

PRESIDENT

We are well into 2026 and everyone is working diligently to keep this old church functioning properly. As God is calling us to continue our work here, He is also calling on us to have a vision for our future. Our cabinet discussed having a “get together” or “retreat” to discuss with all of our congregation what we envision the future of Claridon Congregational Church might be. Please consider joining us when we gather together this summer to discuss our church’s vision for the future. ~Janet Sherman

TRUSTEES

AED training on March 22 was very successful with the Chardon Fire Department as we had about 15 participants.

Profound Projects will be starting to install the front doors April 13 and the job will be completed by early May. We had water leaking into the men’s restroom during the storm earlier this week, but Dylan mopped up the water and used the fan and dehumidifier for a few days. Marvin came up to seal the area yesterday, so no rain water will seep in again.

Dylan installed safety railing and added steps going up to the bell tower.

Elevator inspection is April 6.

TREASURER

This Update shows preliminary financial results for the First Congregational Church of Claridon for first quarter 2026. Total Revenues in the Operating Fund are approximately \$21,000 less than budgeted for the first three months of 2026. Revenues for operations do not include gifts restricted for scholarships or the music fund or that will be passed through to other organizations. Total Operating Expenses are about \$1,000 less than budgeted for the quarter, leaving Net Operating Revenue approximately \$20,000 lower than budgeted through March 2026.

Operating Activity for January through March 2026:

Pledges and Gifts	\$ 20,109
Fundraising and Other Revenues	400
Interest Income - estimate	736
Funds from Endowment for	
Operations	<u>4,000</u>
Total Revenues	25,245
Less Operating Expenses	<u>(33,479)</u>
Net Operating Revenue 3/31/26	<u>\$ (8,234)</u>
Balance in Operating Fund	<u>\$ 54,213</u>

The Revenues include funds drawn down from the Endowment of \$16,000, for use in 2026 split between the Scholarship Fund, Contingency Fund, Music and Christian Ed (both in Operating Fund). The Endowment shows a balance of \$110,960 at March 31, 2026 and any withdrawal of earnings is evaluated by the Endowment Committee each year. They will recommend the spending to be approved at the Annual Meeting in January. The Endowment Committee meets quarterly and considers committee requests for upcoming special projects with funds to be drawn from the Endowment in the following year.

I am also working with Dianne Kellogg on our grant application to Living Water Association for a \$4,000 Faith in Action Grant to support the Red Tulip Beyond Project. The application is due by May 15th and awards will be announced in June.

Other Funds –

Balances as of March 31, 2026 in other Funds are as follows:

- Restricted for Music \$ 4,145
- Memorial Funds \$ 41,428
- Scholarship Funds \$ 47,830
- Pass-Thru Contributions \$ 2,079
- Contingency Fund \$136,937
- Capital & Building Fund \$ 42,269

If you have any questions, please let me know and I will do my best to answer them.

Pam Plott, Treasurer

Living Water Association

From Dr. Elena Larssen, Transitional Association General Minister

Many of you are aware that our own Rev. Michael Howard will be completing his service with the Association and has been called as the new Senior Minister of Federated UCC in Chagrin Falls. We are so thankful for his service! Please remember to join us for a celebration on April 8th at First Congregational Akron, Michael's home church. The Litany of Farewell will be offered at 11:30 in the Sanctuary, followed by lunch and celebration.

As Living Water encounters this time of transition, I am pleased to announce that Rev. MiMi Chamberlin will be serving as our Bridge Minister of Faith in Action. Rev. Chamberlin is General Minister of SONKA (The Southern Ohio and Northern Kentucky Association of the Heartland Conference, UCC) and will be providing temporary and part-time coverage for Living Water Association. She will be with us remotely for 12 hours a week, leading the Faith in Action Team and their annual grant program, supporting the SPIRE Center, and working directly with the Discernment and Credentialing working groups of the Committee on Ministry (I will continue as staff lead on COM and work with Oversight, while Kellie Ramirez will continue her role as Registrar). Rev. Chamberlin will begin on May 1st and will continue her ministry with

SONKA-UCC. We especially give thanks to SONKA for being a good neighbor and sharing the gifts of a qualified judicatory professional with LWA during our transition.

Please see the letter of thanks to Michael from our congregation at First Congregational Church of Claridon that follows this newsletter.

Heartland Conference

Summer Camp registration is open and many of the Networks are meeting.

Find your People, Find Your Passion! Connect Through the Networks!



Access the QR Code:

<https://files.constantcontact.com/aa35375c201/25e5bd3b-1444-40b9-bb5f-b255c8083eb4.png?rdr=true>

Anyone interested in learning more about our Association or Conference can go to their websites at <https://heartlanducc.org/> or <https://livingwaterone.org/>.