



50 YEAR MEMBER AND HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE RECOGNITION SUNDAY AND CONFIRMATION SUNDAY

SUNDAY, MAY 19

On Sunday, May 19, during our regular church services, we will welcome our confirmation students as our newest church members and also celebrate and recognize congregants who have been members for 50 years or more. In addition, we will be honoring our high school graduates. Please join us on this special day.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



We need your help in many different ways to make Vacation Bible School a success. Anything you can do to help is appreciated. We need adults or youth volunteers during the week of VBS (June 25-28, mornings), people to put together decorations at home (all instructions and materials will be provided), and help with setup (mornings, June 20-22, and 1:30-3:30pm on Sunday, June 23) and teardown (12:30-2:00pm on Friday, June 28). Please sign up to volunteer on our website at <https://www.rrumc.org/vbs>. Questions? Contact Quinn Bennett at qbennett@rrumc.org.

MEMORIAL GERANIUMS FOR OUR GROUNDS



As part of the memorial observance, the congregation has an opportunity to provide geraniums for **Memorial Sunday, May 26**. Afterward they will be planted on the church grounds as a living memorial for the entire summer. Each geranium plant is **\$7.00**. Please include payment with your order. Those wishing to participate in this act of remembrance should fill in the information below and return it to the Church Office by **Sunday, May 12**.

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

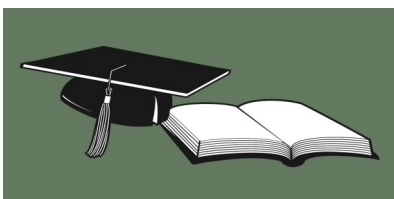
Presented by: _____

No. of plants: _____ @ \$7.00 each = \$ _____
(enclosed)



GERANIUM PLANTING

Willing to help plant our memorial geraniums after Memorial Day? Please contact Sheri Swartz at SSwartz@rrumc.org or 440.331.7676 extension 228 if you can help.



2024 EDUCATIONAL BENEVOLENT ENDOWMENT FUND SCHOLARSHIP

DEADLINE - SUNDAY, MAY 5

Scholarship applications are available for high school seniors and current college students on the church website at www.rrumc.org (search "scholarship"), in the Church Office, or by e-mailing the Church Office at office@rrumc.org. Applications must be submitted by **Sunday, May 5**.

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS ... by Pastor Paul Bennett

Many of us are familiar with the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman in John 4. The Gospel writer, John, tells us that Jesus is travelling to Galilee, then says in v.4, "Now He had to go through Samaria." This is an interesting choice of words because any other self-respecting Jew who "had to go through Samaria" to get somewhere still chose to go around Samaria instead. Samaria was a place that made the Jews uncomfortable as it was home to a group of people whom they looked down upon, even despised. Their prejudice was based on ethnic differences that had developed into feelings of superiority over the Samaritans. Jesus, as we know, was quick to break down such barriers and to violate the societal taboos that developed around them. He walked right through the heart of Samaria and, in doing so, changed the life of a woman who lived there. That woman would then be the connecting piece between Jesus and her entire village. In order for this to happen, though, Jesus had to venture outside the frequented territory, and comfort zone, of an average Jew of His time.



If we dig deeper, we find His venturing into Samaria wasn't intended just to transform that village, but to model this level of courage and love for His disciples who accompanied Him. As His modern-day disciples, I wonder how well we're doing at following Jesus' lead and going through our own personal Samarias rather than circumnavigating them? It is so easy, and quite natural, to build our lives around the people and places we are familiar with, comfortable with, and who do nothing to challenge the way we think or feel about the world or ourselves. This observation is not intended as an attack on our character. We don't wake up every day intending to go around our Samarias. Rather, we've subconsciously built our daily rhythm without Samaria in mind. And all the while, our woman at the well whom we're intended to encounter is waiting for us to show up and transform her life, just as we are waiting for our lives to be changed by the very same encounter. Without question, we can still serve the Lord quite effectively without ever venturing into Samaria. Yet, God's will compels us there nonetheless, as God has something greater in store for all who are willing to venture into the unknown and uncomfortable.

In Acts 8, we see the early apostles busily spreading the Gospel in Jerusalem until a great persecution breaks out against the church and they are forced to scatter. Those who were scattered, however, continued to tell of Jesus wherever they went. One of Jesus' original twelve disciples, Philip, went directly to a city in Samaria of all places to continue spreading God's Word, and the entire region was converted to followers of Christ! Philip had clearly been paying close attention to Jesus' example during their Samaria visit. Shortly thereafter, an angel prompted Philip to go to a rarely travelled "desert road" where he encountered a foreign man from Ethiopia, who worked in the palace of a pagan queen, sitting in his chariot reading from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. I think we can safely call this a divinely inspired encounter! Philip shared the Good News about Jesus with the man and soon after baptized him as a Christ-follower.

Friends, God is calling us to our Samarias, to our "desert roads", in much the same way He did Philip. To whom and to where is God specifically calling you? Contributing to our expanding efforts at Story Church is a great opportunity to discern your answer to this question. The needs we can fill there are tremendous. And our own needs for spiritual growth, perspective, and opportunities to humbly serve "the least of these" are perhaps even greater than the tangible needs we are meeting there for others. I encourage you to prayerfully consider how you might contribute. Or seek the Lord to identify your own Samaria. But do not miss out on this incredible calling God has placed on the lives of all who follow Him.

With you in service, Pastor Paul

THANKYOUS

- Please share our gratitude with your congregation for their gracious hospitality enabling the West Shore Chorale to provide the gift of music to the surrounding community and your members. It is a win/win, furnishing an opportunity for community attendees to be in your lovely church at the beginning of Advent and also providing a venue for us to perform. We look forward to partnering with you again on the first Sunday evening in December. Faithfully and musically yours, Gloria Homolak, President, The West Shore Chorale.
- Many special thanks to Mark Bacon and Frank Thomas for re-creating our altar at Story Church! The amount of time, effort and love that was poured into this beautiful part of worship was incredible. We so appreciate your dedication toward the beautification of our sanctuary! - Lynn Gorton & Lisa Thomas, Story Church



CLEVELAND FOOD BANK

MONDAY, MAY 13

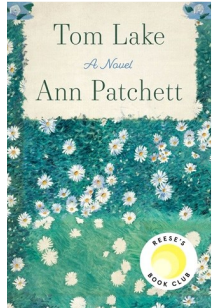
The next Food Bank night for adult volunteers (age 14 and over) will be Monday, May 13 from 6:00-8:00pm. Those who wish to car pool will meet at the church at 5:15pm. To register, please contact Dave Sagerser at dsagerser@aol.com or 216.525.0779.



CAREGIVER SUPPORT

GROUP MONDAY, MAY 20

Attention caregivers, if you are caring for a loved one and would like to meet with others from our church family in a similar role, please join our support group led by Marcia Hesselgrave and Leann Hofelich. Our next meeting will be on Monday, May 20, at 6:00pm. Light refreshments will be served. Questions? Contact Lynn Gorton, FCHP, at L.Gorton@rrumc.org.



BOOK CLUB

THURSDAY, MAY 16

Join us on Thursday, May 16, at 10:00am at the church as we discuss "Tom Lake" by Ann Patchett. Questions? List of future books? Contact Bruce Biggin at brbiggin@netscape.net or 216.544.5980. Always happy to see

new faces, and regular attendance is not required.

GRIEF CARE

THURSDAY, MAY 16

Those experiencing grief are invited to join us on Thursday, May 16, at 1:00pm in the parlor. MaryElin Halek and Lynn Gorton lead this faith-based group to share devotions, prayer, and the comfort of friendship. Always confidential as people are going through many types of losses and are looking to find a safe place to find solace. Come, sit, and observe or feel free to share. This monthly group is to meet your needs as you process through your grief journey. For more information, please contact Lynn Gorton CLM, FCHP at L.Gorton@rrumc.org.



LGBTQA+ SUPPORT GROUP

THURSDAY, MAY 23

LGBTQA+ Support Group is a ministry of Rocky River UMC which provides a safe space for members of the LGBTQA+ community and their friends and family to share their joys and concerns in a safe and confidential space. Meetings are usually held on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00pm at the church. We will meet in the library on Thursday, May 23. Questions? Please contact Mark Brandt at brandt486@gmail.com or Rev. Laurie Bruce at lauruce83@gmail.com.



GIFTS OF MUSIC - BEFORE BACH: AN EXPLORATION OF EARLY HARPSICHORD LITERATURE

SUNDAY, MAY 19

Join us as harpsichordist, percussionist, pianist, and teacher Sean Kleve explores the emotional and musical impact of repertoire from the early masters of the harpsichord. Intimately presented in the Chapel at 3:00pm on Sunday, May 19.

Join us on Thursday, June 6 at Houlihan's Westlake, OH to help raise funds for **Twice Blessed Free Store, Rocky River UMC.**

15 - 20% of all food proceeds from Thursday, June 6 from 5 PM to 9 PM will be donated to **Twice Blessed Free Store, Rocky River UMC** when you mention this flyer. The more food proceeds, the higher percentage donated ...

Twice Blessed Free Store, Rocky River UMC

The Twice Blessed Free Store was created to help people meet their basic needs by providing free-of-charge clothing, household items and toiletries to area families. Donated goods are collected, sorted, and stocked with the purchase of some critical supplies, such as paper products, diapers, and toiletries, to assure they are in stock each week so that families in need have what they are most in need of.

25651 Detroit RD. | Westlake, OH | 440.808.9090 | HOULIHANS.COM

YOUTH MINISTRIES by Steven

Young at SYoung@rrumc.org



Crossroads Youth Schedule for May

- May 5 - Crossroads, 7:00-8:30pm
- May 12 - Crossroads, 7:00-8:30pm
- May 19 - End of Year Party, 7:00-9:00pm



Graduation Sunday - MAY 19; PLEASE RSVP BY SUNDAY, MAY 12

You did it! You finished high school and are ready for new adventures.

You have faced challenges and grown in faith and wisdom. You have been a blessing and a light to us and others. Graduates will be celebrated on Sunday, May 19. Please contact Steven Young at syoung@rrumc.org by Sunday, May 12, if you are interested in participating.

End of Year Party – SUNDAY, MAY 19, 7:00-9:00PM

All youth are invited to attend the end of the year party at the church from 7:00-9:00pm. It's a day to celebrate the end of a youth year at the church, but also a day to welcome in summer! There will be food, games, and activities. Hope you can join us!



Youth Mission Trip 2024 - CAMP ASBURY - SUNDAY, JUNE 30 TO FRIDAY,

JULY 5. REGISTER BY SUNDAY, MAY 26!

The base price for the mission trip is now \$275 still with \$125 in potential savings! This is one of the most affordable mission trips RRUMC has ever done. It is nearly half the price of last year's mission trip! Join us for a week of service and fun at Nottingham UMC and Camp Asbury. We will help with a food pantry, painting, landscaping, and more. We will also enjoy paintball, Fun 'n' Stuff amusement park, Whirly Ball, fireworks, and more. Every night, we will share our experiences and grow closer to God and each other. Don't miss this amazing opportunity!

- Who: Students who have completed 6th grade to graduating seniors.
- Cost: \$275 (with potential cost savings of \$125)
- To Register: Pay a \$50 deposit (goes toward the cost of the trip) and email Steven Young at syoung@rrumc.org to sign up. **Registration deadline is Sunday, May 26!**

MARY ANNE & RICHARD CAVICCHI CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SEMINAR

Message to RRUMC from Keynote Speaker Rev. Joy Fenton-Jones

What a gift it was to share the keynote address at this year's Cavicchi Christian Education Seminar! We had an opportunity to share insights about the positive use of power, about our responsibility as people of faith to participate in the well-being of our communities, and about the power of fierce love to transform our hearts and the hearts of our neighbors. If you are reading this article and are new to the principles of community organizing, I invite you to read *Organizing Church* by Conder/Rhodes (short, succinct) or *Transforming Power* by Robert Linthicum (longer, more examination of Scripture). Both books beautifully capture our opportunity to be in meaningful relationship with our neighbors and co-create positive community change through those partnerships!

Did you know that just down the road, at 9900 Madison Avenue, your very own Story Church is using principles of community organizing to do transformational work in the Cudell neighborhood of Cleveland?! An opportunity to get involved and participate in this good work is less than 15 minutes away! Across Greater Cleveland, faith-based organizations are using powerful relational tools to become powerful change-makers in their neighborhoods. If you'd like to learn more, don't hesitate to reach out. The work begins with conversation and relationship, and that is work we can all do.

Blessings for the journey, Rev. Joy Fenton-Jones

Power, Purpose and Love – Responses and Recording Link

At the March 3 Cavicchi Christian Ed Seminar, Rev. Joy Fenton-Jones presented the keynote; Greater Cleveland Congregations led relational meetings trainings; an Interfaith Panel reflected on community-building. Attendees commented: "I love Pastor Joy's interpretation of the Bible in relation to today's world." and "I liked the breakout part with pairing with a person we didn't know. Food was very good as well." and "Listening to the panel discussion makes me want to get involved. I love the discussion." View the recording of this program [and prior ones] at <https://www.rrumc.org/cavicchi-christian-seminar-videos>.

Help Plan Future Seminars

You are invited to our next meeting on **Monday, May 6, at 5:30pm on Zoom**. For the Zoom link or if you have any questions, contact cavicchichristianed@gmail.com.



NURSERY SCHOOL NEWS by *Aaryn Holland & Margery Wanosik, Co-Directors* rrumns@gmail.com

Good Morning Rocky River United Methodist Congregation, as the longer days of May are upon us, we are winding down our time here at the Nursery School. May 17 will be the last day with students this year. We have planned some exciting activities to fill that last week to make it extra special especially for the children that will be off to Kindergarten in the fall. May is always filled with many emotions as the kids are ready to hit summer running, but also sad to leave their teachers that they have grown to love over the school year.

As educators, we try to reflect with a critical eye over the course of the year. What worked, what didn't, how can we accomplish our goals better going forward? We also try to celebrate the milestones that each child made during the year and share with their families to make them aware of all the progress and growth that we have seen throughout the school year.

Thank you for supporting the school and spreading the word about us. We truly strive to be a vital arm of the church to help foster a warm and welcoming environment at the school. An environment where every child

loves to come, loves to learn something new, and their families become a proud part of this community. Have a wonderful and blessed summer. We will see you in the fall.



MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY & SUMMER HOURS

The Church and Church Office will be closed on **Monday, May 27**, for the Memorial Day holiday. Our summer office hours are Monday to Thursday, 9:00am-4:00pm and Friday 9:00am-12:00pm from Memorial Day until Labor Day.



May Anniversaries

(50 or more years and those in five-year increments)

5/15	Grace & Phil Begany	25
5/18	Natalie & David Lombardy	5
5/21	Christin & Martin Lucas	30
5/22	Heather & Jason Lutz	20
5/24	Patty & Russ Vogdes	55
5/26	Jennifer & Frank Schwelik	51
5/26	Gail & Gary Liggett	40
5/29	Ryan & Lauren Dorff	15

May Birthdays

(90 years or more)

5/18	Don Walker	98
5/28	Barbara Burney	93

Births

William Dean Adducci, born on March 21; son of Emily & Dan Adducci; proud grandparents are Cynthia & Bill Kennard.

Callahan Bruce Harrington, born on March 23; son of Grace & Christopher Harrington; proud grandparents are Chris & Stephanie Harrington.

In Sympathy

Carl & Annette Constantino, in the passing away of his mother, Mary Constantino, on March 29.

Robert Kowal, in the passing away of his wife, Carolyn Kowal, on April 7.

Family and Friends of Elaine Brannan, who passed away on April 14.

GREETINGS FROM TWICE BLESSED FREE STORE AND STORY CHURCH!!

Lisa Thomas, TBFS Director

LThomas@rrumc.org

Did you make it to our 3rd annual Easter Egg Hunt this year? If not, you missed out on a really GREAT time! We had a blast!! The best part? The Easter Bunny was there taking lots of pictures with the kids, the Cleveland PD showed up and gave away not one, but two brand-spanking-new bicycles, AND we gave away lots and lots of candy-filled EGGS!!!

But that's not all the fun we've been having. On April 7, we had our second Family Sorting Night of the year. And let me tell you, it was a hoot! We all got together, enjoyed some yummy potluck dishes, shared some laughs, and sorted clothes like pros. It was such a blessing to be surrounded by so many amazing people, all working together to make a difference.

Friends, mark your calendars now, because our next Family Sorting Night is coming up on Sunday, July 7. Don't forget to save the date because you don't want to miss the fun! And hey, if you've got some free time on Saturday mornings, we could really use your help at the Free Store from 9:25am to 12:00pm. Plus, we're always on the lookout for volunteers during the week to help with sorting. If you're interested in lending a hand, please email Lisa at Lthomas@rrumc.org.

Thank you for continuing to support our second campus here at 9900 Madison Ave! We are so blessed to be ONE church with TWO campuses! Just a reminder that there are still so many untapped ministry opportunities here at Story Church. So, if you're interested in diving into ministry or curious about what urban ministry looks like, please give Lisa a call at 216.543.1798. She'd love to chat with you about all the awesome ways you can get involved and make a difference in the lives of those who need it the most!



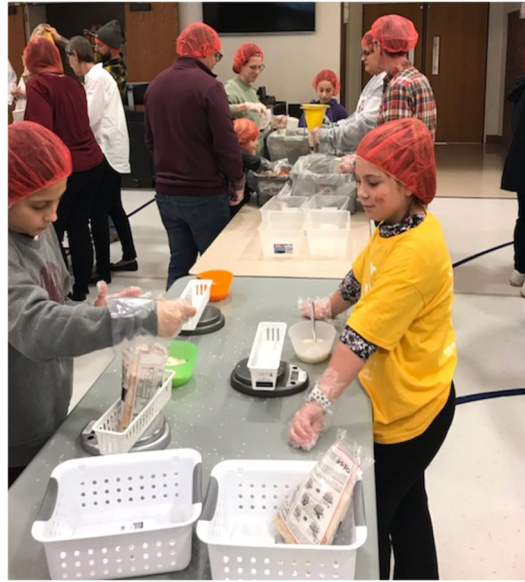
Story Church Easter Egg Hunt and Family Sorting Night Photos!

RISE AGAINST HUNGER EVENT UPDATE by Pastor Paul Bennett

On November 12, the RRUMC family came together in great numbers to pack 10,152 meals for individuals facing hunger. We were told that Rise Against Hunger would contact us when the meals we packed had been designated to a specific region and shipped. Great news, our meals have been shipped! The destination for our meals is.....building anticipation.....the Democratic Republic of the Congo!

Located in the center of Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the second largest country in Africa, with the fourth largest population. Despite its many natural resources, corruption and weak institutions have delayed the country's development. Child malnutrition is widespread, and most of the population lives in conditions of moderate to serious food insecurity, conditions categorized by The Global Hunger Index as an "alarming" level of hunger. To address some of the food security challenges that children, families, and communities in the Democratic Republic of Congo face, Rise Against Hunger partners with organizations that support educational programs by providing meals to children at schools and early child development centers. In some cases, the food children receive at school will be the majority of the food they eat in a day. The meals you packaged will help ensure that children have access to the consistent nourishment they need to live healthy lives and successfully pursue their education.

Thank you, RRUMC, for coming together to serve as the light of Christ for people in need all the way in the Democratic Republic of the Congo!



TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS – BEGINS FRIDAY, MAY 17



RRUMC Sports Ministry is excited to announce the FIRST EVER Tournament of Champions! The Tournament of Champions is a series of sporting events everyone age 16+ is invited to participate in over a period of time, accruing points for both participation and placing in the events, with RRUMC ultimately crowning a champion at the end. The events will run from May to August. The

first event is a CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT to be held on Friday, May 17. Admission is \$5.00 per person (goes to cover event costs and future Tournament of Champion's events). The event will begin at 6:30pm and will be a double elimination tournament. If you have a set of cornhole boards, please bring them along. To sign up, use the QR code. We hope you join us for some fun, fellowship, and friendly competition. With questions, contact the Sports Ministry Coordinator Vanessa Warnock at vwagner@rumc.org or feel free to text 440.213.7495.



Rocky River United Methodist Church
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E-Mail: office@rrumc.org
Web: www.rrumc.org

DATED MATERIALS - PLEASE RUSH
Mailed April 24, 2024

Ministry

Daniel F. Bogre, Senior Pastor
Paul A. Bennett, Associate Pastor
Sheri B. Swartz, Director of Church Ministries
Quinn E. Bennett, Director of Children's Ministries
Lisa P. Sierk, Director of Endowment Ministries
Steven M. Young, Director of Youth Ministries
Lisa Thomas, Twice Blessed Free Store Director
Lynn K. Gorton, Faith Community Health Professional
Vanessa Wagner, Sports Ministry Coordinator

Music Ministry

Jeffrey A. Acker, Organist
Matthew Dolan, Director of Music
Carmen G. Massaro, and Lynn Young, Handbell Choirs
Robert W. Kimmel, Harbor Worship Leader

Mission Ministry

Dr. Belinda Forbes, Managua, Nicaragua

Deadline for June Circuit Rider:
Wednesday, May 8, 2024

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE STORY!

SAVE THESE LATE APRIL DATES

April 23 - RiverMen
April 25 - LGBTQA+ Support Group
April 25 - Lydia Circle UMW
April 28 - Moll Society Sunday

SAVE THESE MAY DATES

May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 - Chancel Choir Rehearsal
May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 - Thursday AM Women's Breakfast Group
May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 - Harbor Worship Rehearsal
May 4, 11, 18 - TBFS Open for Worship & Shopping
May 5 - Communion Sunday
May 5 - Endowment Scholarship Application Due
May 5, 12, 19, 26 - Open Gym Basketball
May 5, 12 - Disciple IV Bible Study
May 5, 12 - Confirmation Class
May 5, 12, 19 - Crossroads Youth
May 5, 19 practice (ringing on May 12) - Joyful Sounds Handbell Choir
May 5, 12, 19 practice (ringing May 26) - Fuller Sounds Handbell Choir
May 6 - Cavicchi Seminar Planning Meeting*
May 7, 14, 21, 28 - Men's Prayer Group
May 7, 14, 21, 28 - Women's Fellowship Group*
May 9 - Shawl Ministry
May 9, 16, 23, 30 - Genesis to Revelation Bible Study
May 12 - Geranium Orders Due

May 13 - Volunteering at Cleveland Food Bank
May 14 & 28 - LIFT Study (Gorton)
May 16 - Book Club
May 16 - Grief Care
May 17 - Cornhole Tournament
May 19 - Confirmation, 50-Year Member Sunday, Graduate Recognition Sunday
May 19 - Gifts of Music Concert (Before Bach)
May 19 - Youth End of Year Party
May 20 - Caregiver Support Group
May 23 - LGBTQA+ Support Group
May 26 - Youth Mission Trip Deadline
May 28 - RiverMen
**virtual meeting via Zoom or other platform*

SUNDAY WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- 8:30am - Chapel Service
- 10:00am - Sanctuary Service
- 11:30am - Harbor Service in Beacon Hall, also livestreamed at www.rrumc.org

OFFICE INFORMATION

Office hours are Monday to Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm. TBFS will be closed on Saturday, May 25, and the Church & Church Office will be closed on Monday, May 27. Between Memorial Day and Labor Day the Church Office will close at 12:00pm on Fridays.