

# ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF TREMONT

May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Fifth Sunday of Easter

A Service of The Word And Holy Communion



## ***Easter 5-A- Way, Truth, Life***

*Crayon and digital worship art*

*By Stushie*

*A Scottish pastor, ministering in East Tennessee*

*Stushie Art. [Stushieart.com](http://Stushieart.com)*



# UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

a just world for all

May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Fifth Sunday of Easter

A Service of the Word and Holy Communion

**"Sometimes we need to open our eyes wider to see the light,  
and our hearts fully to encourage hope and love."**

- Cinda K. Swalley -

## WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY

*\*please stand as you are able,*

### Welcome and Announcements

Prelude- *Betty Funk*

### \*Call to Worship

One: This is what God says:

**Many: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths,**

One: Ask where the good way is, and walk in it,

**Many: And you will find rest for your souls." (Jeremiah 6:16)**

### \*Invocation

Gracious God,  
we now open our eyes,  
ears and hearts  
(to listen to you).  
Please speak to us  
and give us your word,  
for we cannot live  
on bread alone.  
Please light up our insides  
with the work  
of the living Holy Spirit.  
We pray in the name  
of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**\*Hymn - NCH-241 - Joy Dawned Again on Easter Day**

**Joy Dawned Again on Easter Day**

Source: Latin, 5 th century

Translator: John Mason Neale, 1851; alt.

Tune: PUER NOBIS NASCITUR L.M.

Adapter: Michael Praetorius, 1609

Harmonizer: George R. Woodward, 1910

Source: German carol, 15th century

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**1 Joy dawned again on Easter Day,  
the sun shone out with bright array;  
For when the Apostles hid in fear,  
the Risen Christ to them appeared.**

**2 O Jesus, Savior, Gentle One,  
come take our hearts to be your own,  
That we may give you all our days  
the willing tribute of our praise.**

**3 O Sovereign One, with us abide  
in this our joyful Easter-tide;  
From every weapon death can wield,  
your own redeemed forever shield.**

**A READING OF THE WORD**

**First Reading: Act 7:55-60**

*On this Fifth Sunday of Easter, the Revised Common Lectionary continues its series of the first reading from Acts, this time of Stephen's martyrdom in 7:55-60. Stephen, after his arrest, responded to the charges by sharing how God had delivered the people throughout history and sent prophets to them, but the people of God had rejected God's prophets and had not kept God's commandments. The council was enraged against Stephen, but it was when Stephen beheld a vision of Jesus at the right hand of God and proclaimed it to them, the council rushed him out of the city, refusing to listen to him (they covered their ears), and stoned him. Stephen prayed for Jesus to receive his spirit, and that Jesus wouldn't hold this sin against the crowd, right before he died at their hands.*

**7** 55 Stephen, meanwhile, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked to the sky and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right side of God.

56 "Look!" he exclaimed. "I see the heavens opened, and the Chosen One standing at God's right hand!"

57 The onlookers were standing there, shouting and holding their hands over their ears as they did so. They rushed at him as one, 58 and dragged him out of the city. The witnesses then stoned him, having laid their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

59 As they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “O Jesus, receive my spirit.” 60 He fell to his knees and cried out in a loud voice, “Please, don’t hold this sin against them!” And with that, he died.

**Psalm Response: Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 (Responsively)**

*These verses in Psalm 31 are a prayer of help and trust in God. The psalmist calls upon God to rescue and deliver them, but also prays for God to grant them strength and salvation. They know God is the one who protects them, and the psalmist commits their spirit to God, knowing that whatever happens, God is with them. In verses 15-16, the psalmist puts their trust in God, praying for God to deliver them from their enemies, that they might be saved in God’s steadfast love.*

**31** 1 In you, God, I took refuge;  
never let me be disgraced!  
In your justice, deliver me!

**2 Turn your ear to me!**  
**Hurry! Rescue me!**  
**Be the rock I hide behind;**  
**be the walled fortress that saves me!**

3 Because you are my rock, my fortress,  
and for the sake of your Name,  
lead me, guide me!

**4 Pull me out of the trap they set for me,**  
**for you are my refuge!**

5 Into your hands I commit my spirit;  
deliver me, Sovereign, God of truth.

**15 My times are in your hand;**  
**save me from the hands of my enemies and**  
**persecutors.**

**16 Smile on your faithful one;**  
**save me in your love!**

**Second Reading: 1 Peter 2:2-10**

*The Epistle readings continue in 1 Peter, backing up to 2:2-10 (before last week’s reading). The writer uses the metaphor of spiritual milk, as Paul did in 1 Corinthians 3:2, but this time it is a positive metaphor: for new believers, they need to desire what will nourish and satisfy so they can grow in faith. Quoting Psalm 34:8, the writer calls upon the faithful to “taste and see that God is good.” The writer then switches metaphors to that of a living stone. Quoting Psalm 118:22, they are the stone rejected by the world. Jesus also quoted this scripture in referring to himself, but now the writer uses it for the believers, now chosen by God to be the foundation of the church in their day.*

*These believers, mostly Gentile, now have an identity in Christ as a people, the temple of God here on earth.*

**2** 2 Like newborn babies, be hungry for nothing but milk—the pure milk of the word that will

make you grow into salvation, 3 now that you have “tasted that our God is good.”

4 Come to Christ—a living stone, rejected by mortals but approved nonetheless, chosen and precious in God’s eyes. 5 And you are living stones as well: you are being built as an edifice of spirit, to become a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For scripture has it,

“See, I am laying a cornerstone in Zion;  
an approved stone, and precious.  
Those who put their faith in it  
will not be shaken.”

7 The stone is precious for you who have faith. But for those without faith,

“The stone which the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone,” and, at the same time,

8 “an obstacle and a stumbling block.” Those who stumble and fall are the disbelievers in God’s word; it is their destiny to do so.

9 You, however, are a “chosen people, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart” to sing the praises of the One who called you out of the darkness into the wonderful, divine light. 10 Once you were “not a people,” but now you are the people of God; once there was “no mercy for you,” but now you have found mercy.

### **Gospel Reading: John 14:1-14**

*This reading contains the beginning of Jesus’s final discourse to the disciples before his arrest and death. Jesus shares how he is going ahead of the disciples to prepare a place for them, but the disciples are still thinking physically rather than spiritually, and they do not understand what he is talking about. Jesus, speaking directly to the disciples in response to Thomas’s question about knowing the way, explains that for them, he is the way, the truth, and the life—there is no other way to know God. Philip then tells Jesus if he just shows them Abba God, that would be enough. Jesus replies with, “Don’t you know me?” Jesus has shown them that he and Abba God are one. Jesus calls on them to believe in him, to know that he is going to Abba God but that Jesus will answer their prayers, so that Abba God’s glory will be made known. While we may want to move away from gendered language for God, Jesus uses the term Abba (Aramaic: father) to show the intimate relationship Jesus has with God, as God’s beloved One. The disciples have not understood the Messiah in this way before, as being the Son of God.*

**14** 1 “Don’t let your hearts be troubled.

You have faith in God;  
have faith in me as well.

2 In God’s house there are many dwelling places;  
otherwise, how could I have told you  
that I was going to prepare a place for you?

3 I am indeed going to prepare a place for you,  
and then I will come back to take you with me,

- that where I am  
there you may be as well.
- 4 You know the way that leads to where I am going.”
- 5 Thomas replied, “But we don’t know where you’re going. How can we know the way?”
- 6 Jesus told him,  
“I myself am the Way—  
I am Truth,  
and I am Life.  
No one comes to Abba God  
but through me.
- 7 If you really knew me,  
you would know Abba God also.  
From this point on,  
you know Abba God  
and you have seen God.”
- 8 “Rabbi,” Philip said, “show us Abba God, and that will be enough for us.”
- 9 Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and still you don’t know me?  
Whoever has seen me has seen Abba God.  
How can you say, ‘Show us your Abba’?
- 10 Don’t you believe that I am in Abba God  
and God is in me?  
The words I speak are not spoken of myself;  
it is Abba God, living in me,  
who is accomplishing the works of God.
- 11 Believe me that I am in God and God is in me,  
or else believe because of the works I do.
- 12 The truth of the matter is,  
anyone who has faith in me  
will do the works I do—  
and greater works besides.  
Why? Because I go to Abba God,
- 13 and whatever you ask in my name I will do,  
so that God may be glorified in me.
- 14 Anything you ask in my name  
I will do.

### **Choral Response – His Name is Wonderful**

*Music by Audrey Mieir, 1959*

*Choir: Keith Konet, Bob Bucklew and Barbara Rossington*

*Accompanist: Betty Funk*

**Reflection: “Real Questions - An Offer of Comfort” by The Rev. Scott Rosenstein**

## **WE RESPOND**

### **\*Prayer of Response**

God of Oneness, through our ancestors Sarah and Abraham and Hagar, you showed yourself to be the same God no matter where our ancestors wandered, no matter where they called home. You showed yourself to be the One who knew their pain and suffering under oppression, their loneliness in exile, and the One who helped restore our ancestors when they returned home. Through Jesus, we know your oneness in a new way, a oneness with us that outlasts the grave and transcends the world that we know. Your Oneness was revealed to the early followers of Jesus as they recognized themselves as your body in Christ, regardless of their culture or ethnicity or gender, or any other way of dividing. You are One. You bring us together and bind us as One people. In all the divisions of the world that we know, may we be united by your love, across gender, orientation, race, culture, economic status, language, politics—may we recognize your face in each other and strive to be your people, your body, your love to one another. Amen.

### **\*Hymn – NCH 460 - Be Not Dismayed (God Will Take Care of You) vv. 1, 2, & 3**

#### **Be Not Dismayed (God Will Take Care of You)**

Author: Civilla D. Martin, 1904; alt.

Tune: MARTIN C.M. with refrain

Composer: W. Stillman Martin, 1905

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**1 Be not dismayed whate'er betide,  
God will take care of you;  
Beneath God's wings of love abide,  
God will take care of you.**

#### **Refrain:**

**God will take care of you,  
through every day, o'er all the way;  
God will take care of you,  
God will take care of you.**

**2 Through days of toil when heart grows frail,  
God will take care of you;  
When dangers fierce your path assail,  
God will take care of you. [Refrain]**

**3 All you may need God will provide,  
God will take care of you;  
Nothing you ask will be denied,  
God will take care of you. [Refrain]**

### **\*Invitation to Share Our Tithes and Offerings**

God blesses us abundantly. Let us respond to the great grace and offer good things to God with thanksgiving and devotion.

## **The Offertory - *Betty Funk***

### **\*Presentation of Offerings - Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, you heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

### **\*Blessing of the Gifts**

**Holy God, we have received so much blessing from you to walk through this past week. We are grateful for the blessings you have given us, and we return some of them to you. Please use it for your work. In Jesus Christ's name. Amen.**

### **\*Call to Reconciliation**

**Considered too rough for their smooth plans, the builders cast out the Stone they needed. But God builds salvation on the One who is the foundation of all hope. Let us confess our sins to God and one another, trusting we will not be put to shame.**

### **\*Prayer for Forgiveness**

**Hear the brokenness of our lives, Precious God. We cover our ears so we cannot hear the cries of those in need, or you urging us to respond. We rush together to defend every issue that matters to us, but quickly disperse when you would call us to be your holy people. We shout as loud as we can to cheer on our sports teams, but can manage only whispers when it comes to sharing the good news.**

**Forgive us, our Eternal Guide, and do not hold our sins against us. We lay the garments of our foolishness at your feet, so you might clothe us in grace and hope. We would feed on the spiritual food which flows from your heart so we might be strong enough to follow Jesus as he leads us in the Way, the Truth, and the Life.**

*-Silent Prayer-*

### **\*Assurance of Forgiveness**

**One: You are no longer alone - you are God's Beloved. You are not of this world, but residents of God's Kin-dom. You, who once had no hope, have been filled with forgiveness.**

**All: Each one of us, all of us, have received God's mercy in Christ. Forgiven, redeemed, made whole - we are a people made one in faith. Thanks be to Go! Amen**

## **Choral Hymn – God, Who Made the Earth and Heaven**

**Text (st. 1): Reginald Heber, 1783-1826; alt.  
Text (sts. 2, 4): William Mercer, 1811-1873; alt.  
Text (st. 3): Richard Whately, 1787-1863; alt.  
Tune: AR HYD Y NOS 8.4.8.4.8.8.4.**



Welsh Melody, c. 1784  
Choir: Keith Konet, Bob Bucklew and Barbara Rossington  
Accompanist and Choir Director: Betty Funk

## **AN EASTER SEASON COMMUNION LITURGY**

### **Invitation**

One: In this season of Easter, we celebrate the risen Christ

**Many: We celebrate resurrection in our lives.**

One: In this season, we embrace the grace which reaches from the tomb.

**Many: We embrace faith by committing to love in action.**

One: Throughout this season, we shout Hallelujah!

**Many: We shout, Christ is risen! Alleluia!**

### **Prayer of Communion**

One: It is through our neighbors and creation that we see the rising of Christ, O God.

**Many: Creator of Our Earth:**

**We celebrate the shifting of seasons from one to the next.**

**As the earth sheds its cold and snow,**

**it begins to drink in the warm rains**

**and creation comes alive once again.**

**And so in this spirit of brightness and life, we celebrate.**

**We celebrate the risen Christ in our midst.**

**We celebrate the table in which we can join together**

**with friends and strangers, loved ones and enemies.**

**Through this meal which has stood the test of time,**

**we covenant to love you, God.**

**We covenant to love as Jesus the Christ loved us-**

**loving our neighbors as ourselves.**

**Through a simple meal of grain and grape,**

**we, your children, unite.**

**In this season of Easter,**

**we ask that the warm winds of the Spirit encircle this table**

**and accompany us on our journey.**

**May this Spirit help us to recognize**

**the Christ-presence in our midst.**

**May the Spirit open our souls**

**in order for us to see humanity, God and creation**

**through the eyes of Jesus.**

**Amen.**

## **Words of Institution**

It was Jesus who introduced this meal to his followers. Even though Jesus knew he would be betrayed and deserted by those at this supper, he still continued to join them at the table, sharing time and space with whom he grew closest.

As the night lengthened, Jesus took a simple portion of bread. He blessed it and broke it, and shared it with the disciples. He urged them: *Remember me*.

Afterwards, Jesus took the cup. During his blessing, Jesus reminded them how he would go to the ends of the earth in his love for them.

Today, we celebrate this earth-shaking love of Jesus – a love that sent him to the cross and a love that lives eternally with us, encouraging us to live a resurrected life.

### **\*Sharing of the Bread of Life and the Cup of the Covenant**

#### **\*Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Through this space and time together today, we celebrate the covenant that ties us with God, Jesus the Christ, our neighbors and creation. Thank you, Divine Crafter of the Table, for fashioning us a holy meal that unites us with the Body of Christ. Send us into the world resurrected, refreshed and ready to share Christ's unconditional love. Amen.

#### **\*The Lord's Prayer (using "debts" and "debtors")**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
As we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
forever.  
Amen.

## GOING FORTH

**\*Parting Hymn – NCH 386 – The Church's One Foundation vv. 1, 2, & 3**

### **The Church's One Foundation**

Author: Samuel J. Stone, 1866; alt.

Tune: AURELIA 7.6.7.6.D.

Composer: Samuel S. Wesley, 1864

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**1 The church's one foundation  
is Jesus Christ our Lord;  
we are Christ's new creation  
by water and the word;  
From heaven Christ came and sought us  
in love to set us free;  
with precious blood Christ bought us  
for all eternity.**

**2 Elect from every nation,  
yet one o'er all the earth,  
one charter of salvation,  
one God, one faith, one birth,  
One name together blessing,  
one holy food we share,  
to one hope we are pressing,  
at one in work and prayer.**

**3 'Mid toil and tribulation,  
and tumult of our war,  
we wait the consummation  
of peace forevermore,  
Till with the vision glorious,  
our longing eyes are blessed,  
and the great church victorious  
shall be the church at rest.**

### **\*Commissioning and Benediction**

One: Day by day, God will lead us:

**Many: to those pools of peace where we can  
gather with our friends and strangers.**

One: Day by day, Jesus will call us:

**Many: to give ourselves in service,  
to anoint others with hope.**

One: Day by day, the Spirit shows us:  
**Many: the people we might be,  
the community we might become.**

**\*Postlude - Betty Funk**

\* \* \* \* \*

### Credits

- (1) The Call to Worship, Invocation, Invitation to share our Tithes and Offerings, and Blessing of the Gifts are adapted from *The Way: Service Prayer for the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter*, written by Rev. Motomu Ishida is Nihongo (Japanese Language) Pastor of Sycamore Congregational Church, UCC (シカモア組合教会) in El Cerrito, California. Visit Sycamore UCC here: ホーム — SYCAMORE CHURCH UCC (sycamoreucc.org)
- (2) The Prayer of Response is adapted from *Worship Resources for May 7<sup>th</sup>*, written by Rev. Mindi Welton Thomas, and posted April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, on her blog, *Rev-o-lution*. <http://rev-o-lution.org/>
- (3) In the Easter Season Communion Liturgy: The Invitation, Prayer of Communion, Words of Institution, and Prayer of Thanksgiving are adapted from *An Easter Sunday Communion Liturgy*, written by Michelle L. Torigian, and posted March 29, 2018, on her blog, *Michelle L. Torigian - God Goes Pop Culture*. <https://michelleorigian.com/tag/progressive-christian-communion/>.
- (4) The Commissioning and Benediction is adapted from *Alternate text with liturgy/communion for May 7<sup>th</sup> Easter 5-A*, written by Rev Thom M. Shuman , and posted April 30. 2023 to his blog, *Lectionary Liturgies*. <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>
- (5) Permission to stream music in this service obtained from One LICENSE, license#A-736636. All publishing rights reserved

Ministers, *All of Us*  
Scott Rosenstein, *Pastor*  
Betty Funk, *Pianist and Music Director*  
Keith Konet, *Council President*  
Beverly Wurm, *Administrative Assistant*



## NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

### God is Still Speaking...

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you will find a spiritual home in this United Church of Christ congregation. WELCOME!

**Tithes and Offerings** - Checks and Money Orders can be made payable to: "Zion United Church of Christ" and placed in the offering basket or mailed to:

**Zion United Church of Christ  
c/o Keith Konet  
1039 Bridlewood Drive  
Copley, OH 44321**

Questions: Contact Keith Konet at 330.604.6939

### Administrative Assistant, Beverly Wurm

Beverly began a part-time position with us. She is keeping some limited Office Hours at church ( 2700 W.14<sup>th</sup>) /home. The days and hours are:

Monday – 9am – 1pm

Wednesday – 10am-2 pm

Thursday – 9am – 1pm

Beverly can be reached at: [zionchurchtremont@gmail.com](mailto:zionchurchtremont@gmail.com) or by phone at: 216-273-7561 (church) or 216-310-6810 (mobile).

### Please Remember in Prayer

- The Universal Church, its members and mission,
- The nation and all in authority, the leaders of our nation - federal, state, and local.
- For democracy and our democratic institutions and norms in the United States.
- The welfare of the world and the concerns of the local community,
- The interrelationship of Gospel values and civic engagement
- Ministries of the United Church of Christ and of Zion Church.
- The leaders of our church: local, regional, and national, including our Living Water Association UCC, Association General Minister, The Rev. Nayiri Karjian, and Association Faith in Action Minister, The Rev. Michael Howard.
- The ministers and missionaries of the world.
- Those who are refugees and immigrants.
- For children separated from their parents at detention camps along our southern border.
- For racial and religious justice and reconciliation in the United States and around the world.
- Mother Earth and the global reflection on climate disruption.
- For peace, justice, and freedom throughout the world and particularly for the peoples of Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and the United States.
- The people of Turkey and Syria: more than 50,000 people have died following two devastating earthquakes. Hopes of finding people alive have dimmed and experts fear the toll could rise

sharply. Turkish authorities say some 13.5 million people have been affected in an area spanning roughly 280 miles from Adana in the west to Diyarbakir in the east, and 186 miles from Malatya in the north to Hatay in the south. At least 44,374 deaths have been reported in Turkey, while 5,800 951 people have died in Syria. Be with all who grieve and mourn the loss of loved ones, homes, businesses, and infrastructure. Please help the survivors to process and move through the trauma, and to rebuild their lives and communities.

- The people of California profoundly impacted by the atmospheric rivers, flooding rains and winter storms and snow. Be with all who grieve and mourn the loss of loved ones, homes, businesses, and infrastructure. Please help the survivors to process and move through the trauma, and to rebuild their lives and communities.
- Prayers for healing process for the surviving children, faculty, parents, and extended families of the Covenant School, a Christian school for pre-K through 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in Nashville, Tennessee. A mass shooting there left three students and three adults dead.
- Prayers for the healing process for the survivors and staff of Old National Bank of Louisville, Kentucky and their extended families. A mass shooting there left 5 dead and several injured including a responding police officer with critical injuries.
- According to data from the Gun Violence Archive a total of 189 mass shooting incidents have occurred in the US as of May 3rd 2023. In 2022 a total of 648 mass shootings. In 2021 a total of 693 mass shooting incident occurred across the US, in 2020 a total of 611, in 2019 a total of 417, with 337 incidents in 2018. While we pray for the families and friends of those whose lives have been taken in violent acts – and we pray for those injured in body, mind, soul, and spirit – and for their neighborhoods and communities across the United States - We know that our words and prayers are not enough. We must repent for our collective inaction and commit to tirelessly working toward meaningful gun violence prevention.
- For those affected by the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic and the omicron variant and various variant surges: for all those who are infected and/or sick, and those who are grieving, for all who are affected, all around the world, for essential workers and frontline workers...we pray for comfort, for safety, for health, and for wholeness.
- The residents and management of the San Sofia Apartments who share a campus with us.
- Those anticipating surgery, recovering from surgery, or undergoing medical procedures, tests, or treatments
- Those living in assisted living or in a nursing home
- Those who are homebound and those who are caregivers
- Those who suffer or are in any trouble, and the departed.
- Those on our church prayer list:
  - Patti Augustine and family
  - Robert O. Bucklew (*Bob Bucklew's Dad*) is at Mapleridge Senior Living Willoughby, oh.
  - Betty Funk (*our Minister of Music*) receiving care in a medical rehab unit.
  - Marian Heffernan (*neighbor to Scott and Bob; friend of Elaine – health concerns*)
  - Ken Kauffman & friends: Nim Bryant, Isadora Almaro, Joe & Janelle Reardon, Barbara Reed, Nancy Moore's sister has passed away.
  - Jocelyn Paulette and her parents, Kevin & Jacqui Konet - *prayers for recovery.*
  - Keith Konet
  - Marcia Leslie (*neighbor and friend – health concerns*)

- The family and loved ones of Elaine Lukacs.
- Linda and James Mortach (*Elaine Lukacs' sister & brother-in-law*) & Linda's daughter
- Patricia Matheny (*prayers for her Cousin Paul Kevin*) Prayers for her family at the loss of her brother Keith Matheny who grew up in the Zion Church. Also the loss of a dear friend Craig Lucas.
- Barbara Rossington (*move to a new senior housing community*) Prayers for Barbs cousin Robert for upcoming tests and procedures.
- Henry Senyak (*resident community leader – cancer*)
- Debbie Webb (*Debbie has fallen a couple of times – in one fall she suffered a broken femur – and in a second recent fall, she broke a bone in her arm. She is recovering*)
- Beverly Wurm and family

### Emergency Appeal for Turkey and Syria



Thousands have been killed in Turkey and Syria by a massive earthquake that struck before dawn on the border of the two countries. The magnitude 7.8 quake, centered in a heavily populated area of southeastern Turkey but felt as far away as Israel and Cyprus, collapsed buildings and buried scores of people in the rubble.

**Donate online with the link: <https://support.ucc.org/donate-now>**

**or text UCCDISASTER to 41444. Donations may be sent by check made payable to the United Church of Christ, PO BOX 71957 Cleveland, OH 44194. Please note "Turkey and Syria" on the memo line.**

**Update on my sabbatical leave**  
**Rev. Nayiri Karjian, Living Water Association UCC, Association General Minister**

You are probably aware by now that I will be on sabbatical leave beginning Memorial Day weekend, Sunday, May 28 through August 28.

I am grateful to you, our whole Association, for granting me this sabbatical for rest, renewal and rejuvenation. I am also grateful to our Council, Committee on Ministry and others who worked ahead so that during the summer the workload at the Association will be light. Thank you!

Of course our Association's office will remain open and the ministry will continue. If you need the Association please call or e-mail the office, Kellie Ramirez, our Information management and media staff at 330 940 2220 x 100, Kellie – registrar@livingwaterone.org.

We are blessed with gifted and capable staff and leadership – Our Committee on Ministry, our Association Council, our committees can handle the ministry especially for the summer months, and for that I am deeply grateful.

My suggestion is – whatever your Association need please connect with Kellie Ramirez first. She will guide you to the right resource.

If you personally are thinking of transitioning this summer, please let me know about your plans prior to my sabbatical leave so we can engage the appropriate process.

Of course, Michael Howard our Minister of Faith in Action will continue with his specialized ministry and Machel Miller our Financial admin will be available for all questions financial and Mike Bone as SPIRE Center Support.

Again, whatever your Association need please contact Kellie Ramirez first. She will guide you as needed.

As always, thank you for your ministry and leadership among us. I pray that you have a joyful and restful summer as well.

Continued blessings,

Nayiri Karjian

Association General Minister