

ISSUE 7097—DECEMBER 2025

The Herald

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF
TALLMADGE

United Church of Christ

"Making God the Foundation of Everyday Living"

Christmas Eve at First Congregational Church

I can't believe that I am actually writing the December article of the Herald. Wasn't it just summer a few weeks ago? I'm not saying anything you haven't said/thought, but time is on a breakneck speed and only seems to be getting faster with each passing year. (Personally I hope it slows down when my twin grandsons are born!)

It is incumbent upon the church in every age to tell the story of Jesus with freshness and authenticity. I have always appreciated the liturgical cycle that begins in Advent. We prepare for the birth of Jesus and celebrate his arrival on Christmas Eve. We then follow along his life cycle through his travels and teachings. These scenes also flash by too fast. In a blink of an eye, I will be writing about the culmination of his life and our approaching Holy Week experiences. I know, I know, slow down Rev.!

Okay, so first Advent/Christmas.

In the desire to start this yearly journey and celebrate the birth of Jesus in fresh and authentic ways, we are endeavoring to create a Christmas Eve experience to immerse ourselves more fully into the story. The 4:30pm Christmas Eve service is entitled, "A Night of Journey and Joy." We are envisioning this as a Bethlehem marketplace. We want to try and capture the chaos and expectant joy of the tiny Judean town that witnessed first hand the birth of Jesus.

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85 Heritage Dr.
Tallmadge, OH 44278
Phone: 330.633.4931

We will begin at 4:30 in the Fellowship Hall. Come and visit our “Bethlehem market stalls.” There you will find a craft stall for a make-it-and-take-it holiday craft. There will be music and carol singing. There will be a refreshment stall where you can have cocoa and cookies. We will have tables and chairs for conversation as well.

We are also asking you to bring some diapers for Baby Jesus. There will be a stall to drop off your donations. These diapers will be donated to a local women’s shelter.

Mary and Joseph will arrive at some point, and we will join their procession to the sanctuary where we will finish the service. We are hoping that this immersive experience will help us all deepen our praise and devotion to the newborn king.

There will be the traditional Lessons and Carols service at 7:00pm as well. At this service we will hear the story again, and this service will feature our musicians, including the yearly visit of our cellist and harpist.

Whichever service you choose to attend, we hope you will find it to be a meaningful experience.

Grace for the journey,



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

NOV 23	24TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Scripture:	John 6:25-35
Message:	“All Glory Be Thine”
NOV 30	1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Scripture:	Mark 13:24-37
Message:	“Upon a Midnight Clear: Peace”
DEC 7	2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Scripture:	Mark 1:1-8
Message:	“Upon a Midnight Clear: Still”
DEC 14	3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
	CHRISTMAS PAGEANT
DEC 21	4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Scripture:	Luke 1:26-38
Message:	“Upon a Midnight Clear: Rest”
DEC 24	CHRISTMAS EVE 4:30 PM & 7:00 PM
4:30 PM	Bethlehem Marketplace Service
7:00 PM	Christmas Eve Service
DEC 28	1ST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS
	Christmas Carol Sing in Fellowship Hall

UPCOMING EVENTS: Advent & Christmas

Hanging of the Greens	Nov.30, after worship
WF Christmas Luncheon	Dec. 4th, 12pm
Christmas Pageant	Dec. 14th, during worship
UM Christmas Party	Dec. 14th, 5:30pm
Christmas Concert	Dec. 21st, during worship
Blue Christmas Service	Dec. 21st, 4pm
Christmas Eve Services	Dec. 24th, 4:30 pm & 7pm



**MEN'S
PRAYER
BREAKFAST**

**SAT.,
DEC. 20
@
9:00 AM**

BIBLE & BREWS
DECEMBER 17, 2025 | 7 PM



@ Sammie's

THE PRAYER CHAIN CONNECTION

We pray for the names listed below and also for many other church members and their concerns, which remain confidential. You may call or text Diana Caldwell with your prayer concerns @ 330-265-5723. *Please remember in prayer:*

Brad, Noreen, and Tim Ashley
Sharon Bible
Katie Ann Bickett
Margarete Boschert
Zander Boyd
Jim Brown (Sandy Pressler's son-in-law)
Patti Calvarese
Jim Caplinger
Jim Collinson (friend of Connie Mason)
Rylin Davis and family
Sean and Sara Doty
Lyn Fendenheim (friend of Joe Labay)
Debbie Fickes
Karen Ford
Amibeth and Audrey Gaul
Marge Gibbs
Eleanor Hall
Angela Hammelman (daughter of Wally and Donna Atwood)
Alleen Hilbish
Jim Jackson (Bonnie Fordham's son-in-law)
John James
Zell Lambert
Roberta Lewis
Ellen McKee
Ron Mitchell
Linda Moreland (Mike Cammel's cousin)
Robert Nehrenz
Bob Poff
David and Jackie Parker
LTJG John Norton (Connie Stone's grandson)
Bonnie and Matthew Rains
Heather Read (Ronda's daughter)
Roger Riddle (friend of Wally Atwood)
Sara Rooks
Alice Sheeler
Eddie Showalter (Linda Kester's cousin)
Lt. Maxwell Spear (Connie Stone's grandson)
Jeff Sullivan
John Triola (friend of Joe Labay)
Richard and Karen Thomason
Kim and Noel Walters
Ensign 2 Kaitlyn Wetter (Kester's granddaughter)
Don Woerz
Alzheimer's Care Giver Support Group

***Blessed be God who did not refuse me
the kindness I sought in prayer.
Psalm 66:20***



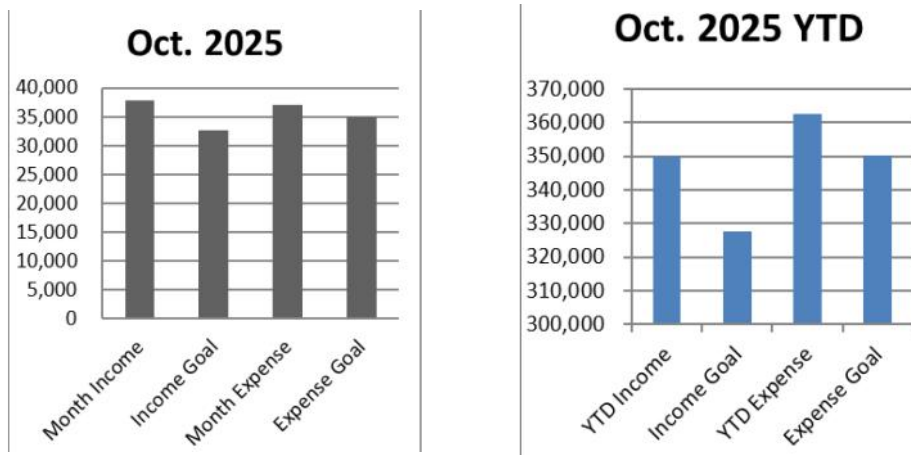
We will be using the theme “Upon a Midnight Clear” for the Advent season this year at FCC. Edmund H. Sears, a Unitarian minister in Wayland, Massachusetts, wrote the hymn “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear” in 1849. It was published that year a few days after Christmas in the Boston *Christian Register*. While obviously a Christmas hymn due to its theme of the angels' song, there is no mention at all of Christ or His birth about which the angels sang. It is a social gospel hymn.

The first and second stanzas (“It came upon the midnight clear” and “Still through the cloven skies they come”) describe the coming of the angels and their song. The third condemns war, and the fourth commiserates with those in bondage and trial. The fifth stanza (“For lo! the days are hastening on”) describes a future time of peace.

An overarching theme of this hymn is the contrast between the message “peace on earth, good will toward all” proclaimed by the host of angels at Christ's birth (Luke 2:14) and the war and oppression that dominate the Earth. While this hymn was originally written as the Civil War loomed for the US, we need to hear this message of peace now more than ever. Plan on joining your church family this Advent to consider what it means to be a people who follow the Prince of Peace!



MONTHLY FINANCIALS



October 2025 operating income of \$37,755 was \$5,005 **above** the monthly income need. Operating expenses for the month were \$37,047 resulting in a **surplus** of \$708 in October, and a YTD **deficit** of (\$12,515). Faith Offerings in October continued to rebound, and we continue to hope for a strong finish for the church calendar year. Expenses were above budget in October with repairs but will hopefully decline in November. We look forward in prayer to a theology of generosity and the ability to strengthen the growth of our ministries as we move through the year. Contact the Church office to find out how to sign up for automatic monthly giving. Offerings may also be made online through a link on our website, mailed to the Church or sent from your bank's online system.

QUILT DONATION DRAWING

The Hands in Service group will be selling donation drawing tickets for the Falling Blocks and Stars quilt through December 14th. Tickets cost only \$1.



**Tallmadge Good
Neighbors
Christmas Giving**

Tallmadge Good Neighbors will give gift cards to needy families this year. Gift cards from grocery stores and department stores like Walmart, Target, and Meijer would be appreciated.

In order to support these families, please bring gift cards to church and put them in the offering plate or give them to Cathy in the office by November 30th.

END OF YEAR FINANCIAL INFORMATION

If you have reached an age where you are required to take a minimum distribution from your IRA Account, talk to your tax and investment advisors about having the distributions sent directly to First Congregational Church and/or any other qualified charities to which you donate. This could help reduce your taxable income.

In order to be included in your 2025 "gift letter" from the Church, monetary gifts must be received by the Church by December 31, 2025, or if mailed, post marked by that date.



Hanging of the Greens

Join your First Congregational family as we decorate our home for the holy seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany! Join us after worship on the First Sunday of Advent, November 30th, to deck the halls.

Blue Christmas. During the holidays, so many of us may suffer for all kinds of reasons. The magnitude of our weary world weighs on our hearts and minds. We wrestle with chronic pain, broken relationships, shattered dreams, fragile faith, and unexpected losses. Our grief and sorrow feel particularly acute when compared to the festivity and joy everyone else seems to be feeling. First Congregational Church of Tallmadge, in response to these realities, will offer a "Blue Christmas" service (also sometimes called the Longest Night service).

This contemplative service will allow for space to reflect on our grief and longing during this season. Soothing scriptures and subdued hymn singing will allow us to hear the Christmas story while not being forced to sing "Joy to the World" when our hearts are hurting. Our Blue Christmas service will be held on Sunday, Dec. 21st (the Longest Night) at 4:00 PM.



"Jesus: Who is This Person We Profess to Follow?"

2026 All-Church Retreat

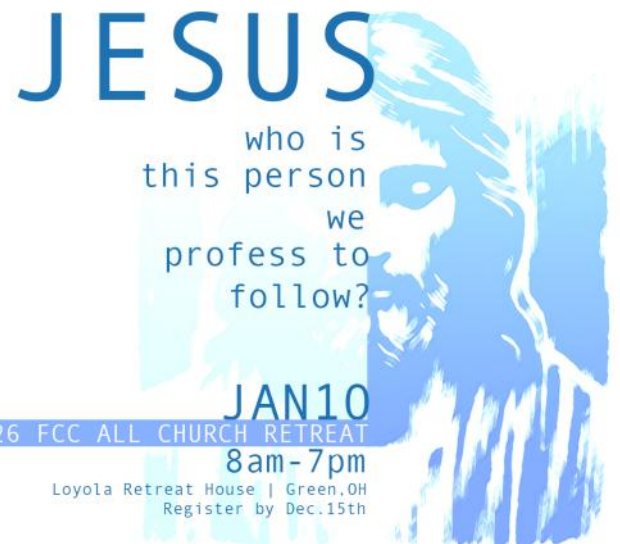
²³Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who has promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as we see the Day approaching.

(Hebrews 10.23-25)

Over the centuries, Jesus has been many things to many people. Our collective thoughts are perhaps shaped by years of Sunday School, Bible Study, and private devotion. It seems increasingly, however, like Jesus is being "bent" to accommodate theological schemes that may not be in line with who Jesus was and what he actually taught. This year's retreat will focus on discovering who this person is that we profess to follow.

We'll study the Historical Jesus, the Teachings of Jesus and what it means to be a "Christian." The distinction between calling yourself a Christian and actually being a follower of Jesus is crucial. At the retreat we will also explore what it truly means to follow Jesus, rather than merely holding the title of Christian.

We are planning a fantastic time to engage in community-building, hands-on activities, games, worship, study the bible, and spend quality time in small groups. Sign-ups begin on Sunday, November 23, before/after church in the Atrium. Registration deadline is December 14. The cost for the one-day retreat, which includes all meals and retreat materials, is \$60.00 per person.



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP
SPAGHETTI
DINNER



4:30-6:30 PM

3RD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH

**TO-GO ORDERS CALL
330-630-0704**

Choir
NOTES

Be sure to attend worship on December 21st, at 10 AM to hear our Choir Christmas Concert.

It's our musical Christmas gift to the congregation, and it's sure to put you in the Christmas spirit.

Women's Fellowship
Christmas
LUNCHEON

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4th
12 PM @ THE VENUE**

2025 CHRISTMAS EVE SPECIAL MUSIC
DONATION FORM

Each Christmas, we are blessed to have instrumentalists assist in the Christmas Eve service. You can contribute to our special music fund to support these musicians by making an honorary or memorial gift. Please fill out this form and return it to the office by **December 7th**. Names of those honored will be listed in the bulletin on Christmas Eve.

Name _____ Phone _____

Total amount enclosed \$ _____

Message _____

UM UPCOMING EVENTS

Grades 6-12

UM DEC. 2025

SCHEDULE

SUN 7	FAITH IN ACTION 🕒 9 AM 📍 Youth Room
SUN 7	SUNDAY IN SERVICE ASSEMBLE FLEECE BLANKETS HOLIDAY MOVIE & HOT CHOCOLATE 🕒 6-8 PM 📍 Fellowship Hall
SUN 14	YOUTH FELLOWSHIP UM CHRISTMAS PARTY 🕒 5:30-8PM 📍 Fellowship Hall
SUN 21	FAITH IN ACTION 🕒 9 AM 📍 Youth Room CONFIRMATION NO CLASS IN DECEMBER DELIVER SIS PROJECT 🕒 11:15 AM
SUN 28	WINTER BREAK

UNITED IN CHRIST

United in Thanks Meal

A Seat at the Table is Waiting for You!
Join us for our November Youth Fellowship — a meal of thanks filled with food, friendship, and fun!

📅 Sunday, November 23rd
🕒 5:30–8:00 PM
📍 Fellowship Hall



Come hungry, come thankful, and come ready to celebrate together!

December Sunday in Service

Let's gather our hearts and share warmth with those who are shut in this holiday season!

Join us in service as we make fleece lap blankets for senior citizens — a cozy reminder that they are loved and remembered.

We'll put on a holiday movie, sip hot chocolate, and prepare these gifts as a "Light of the World" offering of comfort and joy.

📅 Sunday, December 7
🕒 5:30–8:00 PM
📍 Fellowship Hall



📅 Sunday, December 21
🕒 11:15 AM (after worship)
📍 Deliver SIS project to shut ins

UM Christmas Party

Youth! Festive Frolics Await!

It's time for fun at our UM Christmas Party! Come cozy in your Christmas PJs, enjoy food, and join in the holiday cheer!

Don't forget to grab a stocking from Ms. Anne for our gift exchange — fill it creatively!
\$15 gift limit.

Let's celebrate the season together with laughter, love, and some Christmas magic!

📅 Sunday, December 14
🕒 5:30–8:00 PM
📍 Fellowship Hall



Pageant Sunday

December 14

The children will be sharing the annual
Christmas pageant,
Through My Eyes: The Christmas Story
By Wendy Brown

Please come support their hard work and
dedication to sharing the Birth of Jesus. We
will have the traditional hot chocolate and
cookie bar for you to enjoy, too.

Save the Date

Grade 3-4-5 Lock-In

Friday, January 23

@ 7-10 pm

We eat, play games, meet new
friends and become tired! What a
great way to spend a Friday night.

Cost \$5; friends encouraged

Christmas Pageant Practice

We are currently practicing for the pageant which will be shared on December 14. If you have children younger than 5th grade who want to join us, we would love to have them.

Nov. 19 @ 4:30— actors with speaking parts only

Nov. 26— no practice

Dec. 3 @ 4:30— any child that wants to be in the pageant (speaking and non speaking).
We will practice about 30 minutes.

Dec. 10 @ 4:30— anyone that wants to be in the pageant.

Dec. 13 @ 10—dress rehearsal with all participants. Please do your very best to have all children at this practice. We will practice about an hour.

Please practice these songs at home with the children in the pageant. We would love to have them sing during the pageant.



An Angel visits Mary



No Room at the Inn

Treehouse Preschool



Treehouse Preschool had a very successful Art Show. Each child had three pieces in the show. We also had a photo booth and an interactive art sculpture for family members to partake in. What a fun evening we had!



NEW 4:30 Christmas Eve Worship Service

We need your help creating a market day atmosphere for our NEW Christmas Eve service. We are offering a 4:30 **Christmas Eve service, A Night of Journey and Joy**. This is an interactive service that will bring a Bethlehem Marketplace to life as part of our worship service. There are things we need for the experience.

8-10 ft wooden ladder

Burlap: in sheets or bolts, any size

6-Backlighting or up-lighting for indoors

10-Larger pots/urns- we would love to borrow these, please mark with your name

10-Large basket- we would love to borrow this, please mark with your name

Many Artificial flickering battery candles- we can borrow these, please mark with your name

Large decorative pillows– we can borrow these, please mark with your name

We also could use some help with manpower to get things ready. We are going to have a workday on December 8 @ 10 am. We are going to cut cardboard. Then on Dec. 19 @ 10 am, we are setting the decorations for this service. If you are willing to help either of those days, please see Wendy or Anne.



FAITH IN ACTION

We will meet Sunday mornings at 9:00 AM on the 1st and 3rd Sundays.

Rm 207 Roberta Nehrenz for ages 4 to 2nd grade

Rm 204 Dianne Drummond for grades 3rd–5th

Rm 102 Kyle & George Herron for grades 6th–12th



Confirmation will be also be meeting this year after worship. This is for students 8th grade and older who would like to learn more about our church, our history, the traditions and the foundations of our faith.

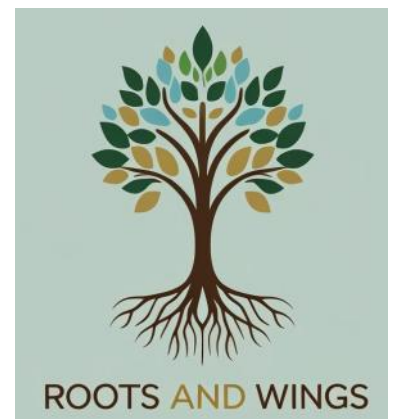
WORSHIP ART MINISTRY (WAM)



We have started meeting weekly for WAM, where children 5th grade and younger will discover the weekly scripture through art and activities. We will head to the Fellowship Hall most Sundays following the Children's Message. We would love for your child to bring his or her bible to WAM if they have received it.

Root and Wings

Roots and Wings is a new fellowship group for grandparents and grandchildren to grow in faith and friendship together. Inspired by Colossians 2:6–7, we seek to be “rooted and built up in Him” as we share activities, stories, and time that strengthen family bonds and create lasting memories. This is open to all children, but our activities will be geared toward elementary-aged grandchildren. If your child wants to come and doesn't have a local grandparent, we can find an adoptive grandparent that would like to participate. If you have grandchildren that don't normally attend FCC, they are welcome too. The next few meetings will be on the **THIRD SUNDAY** instead of the second Sunday of the month due to scheduling... **January 18 and February 15.**



Worship Attendance

Oct 19	116	Nov 2	151	Nov 16	133
Oct 26	128	Nov 9	131		



UPCOMING SUNDAYS

Greeters

Nov 23	Mark and Cathleen Clark
Nov 30	Jack and Helen McKee
Dec 7	The Johnson Family
Dec 14	Tom and Joe Labay
Dec 21	Jim and Kathy Harris
Dec 24	Mark and Cathleen Clark

Altar Flowers

Nov 23	Bob Haydu
Nov 30	
Dec 7	Sandy Haydu
Dec 14	Cammels
Dec 21	POINSETTIAS
Dec 24	POINSETTIAS

**Sign up in
the hallway
\$28 per
arrangement**

Ushers

Nov 23	Joe Labay, Ann and Patrick Hagan, Larry Robinson
Nov 30	Larry Robinson, Joe Labay, Tom Labay, Gary Myers
Dec 7	Larry Robinson, Dave Marconi, Tom Labay, Ken Caldwell
Dec 14	Sandy Haydu, Karen Huth, Kim Darkow, Jane Charles
Dec 21	Dave Marconi, Jane Charles, Sandy Haydu, Gary Myers
Dec 28	Joe Labay, Ann and Patrick Hagan, Larry Robinson



A WORD OF THANKS!

Dear Choir, Thank you so very much for the card and all the notes! It lifted my spirits and made me feel so much better! Love, Brenda

Dear Prayer Chain Family and Prayer Shawl Group, I can't thank you all enough for all of your prayers and support during my journey with cancer and then a broken hip. I gave this all to God from the beginning and I knew he had a plan for my family and me! I don't know if you are also involved with the Prayer Shawl Ministry, but whoever is, if you could convey my thanks to them as well for the beautiful shawl as well as their thoughts and prayers. I hold a special place for all of you in my heart. God Bless, Peggy Klinger

Dear First Church Family, Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the wonderful and surprising Appreciation Lunch you hosted for me after church on Nov. 1. It was so thoughtful and I appreciated it very deeply. You are all a blessing to me. With love, Rev. Dan

DECEMBER 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 12:30 PM—Ladies Study 2:15 PM—Chair Yoga 5:00 PM—Social Action Meeting 6:00 PM—Heritage 6:30 PM—Trustees	2 6:00 PM—Naranon	3 9:00 AM—Quilters 4:30 PM—Pageant Practice 7:00 PM—Cub Scouts	4 10:00 AM—WW 12:00 PM—WF Christmas Luncheon 6:00 PM—WW 6:00 PM—Bells 7:00 PM—Choir	5	6 7:30/9:00 AM—WW 10:00—6:00 PM—Bell Ringing at Acme
7 9:00 AM—Faith in Action 10:00 AM—Worship 11:00 AM—Choir Christmas Party 5:30 PM—Youth Service Project	8 12:30 PM—Ladies Study 2:15 PM—Chair Yoga 6:00 PM—Heritage	9 6:00 PM—Naranon	10 9:00 AM—Quilters 4:30 PM—Pageant Practice 7:00 PM—Cub Scouts	11 HERALD DEADLINE 10:00 AM—WW 1:00 PM—Staff meeting 6:00 PM—WW 6:00 PM—Bells 7:00 PM—Choir	12	13 7:30/9:00 AM—WW 10:00 AM—Pageant Practice
14 9:00 AM—EC Meeting 10:00 AM—Worship/ Pageant 11:30 AM—Hot Cocoa Bar 11:30 AM—Quilt Drawing 5:30 PM—Youth Christmas Party	15 12:30 PM—Ladies Study 2:15 PM—Chair Yoga 2:30 PM—WF Meeting 6:00 PM—Heritage	16 6:00 PM—Naranon	17 9:00 AM—Quilters 10:00 AM—Herald Angels 10:00 AM—Spaghetti Dinner Prep 7:00 PM—Bible and Brews (Sammie's)	18 10:00 AM—WW 1:00 PM—Staff Meeting 4:30—6:30 PM—Spaghetti Dinner 6:00 PM—WW 6:00 PM—Bells 7:00 PM—Choir	19	20 7:30/9:00 AM—WW 9:00 PM—Men's Prayer Breakfast
21 9:00 AM—Faith in Action 10:00 AM—Worship/ Choir Concert 11:15 AM—Youth Service Project 4:00 PM—Blue Christmas Service	22 12:30 PM—Ladies Study 2:15 PM—Chair Yoga 6:00 PM—Heritage	23 6:00 PM—Naranon	24 9:00 AM—Quilters 4:30 PM—Early Christmas Eve Service 7:00 PM—Christmas Eve Service	25 Merry Christmas! OFFICE CLOSED	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27 7:30/9:00 AM—WW
28 10:00 AM—Christmas Carol Sing in Fellowship Hall	29 OFFICE CLOSED	30 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 AM—ACSG 6:00 PM—Naranon	31 OFFICE CLOSED			

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
PO BOX 420
TALLMADGE OH 44278
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
TALLMADGE OH
PERMIT NO. 30

DATE: November 19, 2025

Spiritual and Pastoral Care Ministry Contacts

Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group and Elders Ministry	Roberta Nehrenz	330.634.0713	rgnehrenz@att.net
Hearts in Service	Janet McCaulley Barbara Rowles	330.633.3775	34babs@sbcglobal.net
Prayer Chain	Diana Caldwell	330.265.5723	scdcg@icloud.com
Yarning for Peace	Elaine Engle	330.633.0896	elengle@aol.com

Staff E-Mail Addresses

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Cathy Cotter	Administrative Coordinator	info@fcctallmadge.org
Wendy Brown	Director of Family Ministries	wbrownfcc@sbcglobal.net
Nancy Lynn Robinson	Choir Director / Organist	nrbgp@aol.com
Anne Pertick	Digital Minister/ Youth Ministries Coordinator	digitalministry@fcctallmadge.org unitedministry@fcctallmadge.org
Bill Hoover	Finance Administrator	bhooverfcc@sbcglobal.net
Teresa Snyder	Head Custodian	budrose42@yahoo.com
Gary Marlow	Sunday Custodian	