

ISSUE 7100—MARCH 2026

# The Herald

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF  
TALLMADGE

*United Church of Christ*

“Making God the Foundation of Everyday Living”

As you know, I have been attending the UCC Forum in Westphalia, hosted by our dear German partners. We have striven for a couple of years to bring the forum experience to the US and invite our German friends here. We finally have that opportunity this spring. We will hold the inaugural UCC Forum in the US April 13-14 at Bellwether Farm in Wakeman, Ohio. We are pleased to invite our German friends for this important meeting. The Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson will be our keynote speaker.

As the chair of the Heartland Conference German Working Group, I proposed this year's theme on a Zoom meeting. I'm pleased at the response to the theme and it has been adopted. We will be considering, "Solidarity in the Time of Fracture." On an email with Karen Georgia, she offered the scripture Ecclesiastes 4.9-12. It got me thinking as to what she might say/do with the scripture/theme.

We are living in a time of fracture. Political polarization hardens into hostility. Economic inequality stretches communities thin. Social media amplifies outrage while diminishing empathy. Even congregations and families feel the strain of competing narratives about truth, justice, and belonging. In such a moment, the ancient wisdom of Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 sounds less like a sentimental proverb and more like a survival strategy.

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CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...

“Two are better than one,” Qoheleth writes, “because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other... Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone? And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

Ecclesiastes names the vanity of striving, the fleeting nature of success, and the weariness of endless labor. Just before this passage, the writer laments isolation—those who toil without companion, sibling, or child, never asking, “For whom am I toiling?” It is a haunting image: productivity without relationship, accumulation without community.

Into that loneliness comes a counter-wisdom: we are not meant to survive alone.

The passage does not romanticize community. It speaks plainly about falling, cold nights, and vulnerability to attack. Solidarity is not a luxury for good times; it is a necessity in hard ones. When systems fracture and trust erodes, the answer is not radical self-reliance but radical interdependence.

In a time of social fracture, solidarity is the refusal to let anyone fall alone. One of the greatest advantages of our historic and long-standing partnership with the German church of Westphalia is that our relationship is deeply steeped in standing with each other in times of societal challenges. We pledge our solidarity with them in their time of need and they offer the same to us. What, however, does it mean to stand together with global partners when the international web of relationships begin to fracture?

In my time of building relationships with a couple of different German churches, I have learned a lot about the way each of us sees the world. We engage in ministry in vastly different societies with differing practices. I have, however, been impressed with how much we do have in common. Even when we don’t agree on things, this passage is a helpful reminder that two are better than one not because they agree on everything, but because they commit to each other’s flourishing.

The image of shared warmth in this passage is especially powerful. Warmth is not abstract; it is embodied. It suggests proximity, vulnerability, even risk. To keep one another warm in a cold social climate requires drawing close—listening across difference, sharing resources, telling the truth about harm, and staying at the table when it would be easier to walk away.

And then there is the striking final metaphor: “A threefold cord is not quickly broken.” While often used in weddings, its wisdom extends far beyond romantic partnership. A cord gains strength from intertwining strands. Solidarity is not uniformity; it is woven strength. Faith communities, grassroots movements, neighborhood networks, international partners—when braided together by shared purpose—become resilient against forces that would isolate and divide.

For Christians reading Ecclesiastes, the image resonates with the body of Christ. We are many members, yet one body. No part thrives alone. When one suffers, all suffer. When one is lifted, all rise.

In a fractured age, the temptation is to retreat into ideological silos or exhausted individualism. But Ecclesiastes offers a different path: link arms. Lift one another. Share warmth. Weave cords of connection strong enough to withstand the pressures of fear and division.

Two are better than one. And in a time like ours, that ancient truth may be the beginning of healing.

Grace for the journey,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Daniel J. Doty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.



### All-Church/Confirmation Retreat

What an incredible All-Church/Confirmation Retreat we shared together! Throughout the day, we leaned into a powerful question: *Jesus—who is this person we boldly profess to follow?* Throughout the day, we dove into the bible, scripture, studied the life and identity of Jesus of Nazareth, and engaged in meaningful discussions about what it truly means to follow Jesus—not just call ourselves Christian.

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

### Feb 22 1ST SUNDAY IN LENT

*Scripture:* Psalm 32, Matthew 19:3-9, 9:16-17

*Message:* “What’s The Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?: (Don’t) Give Me That Old Time Religion”

### MAR 1 2ND SUNDAY IN LENT

*Scripture:* Psalm 121, Mark 12:28-34

*Message:* “What’s The Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?: Jesus’ Priority: What Matters Most”

### MAR 8 3RD SUNDAY IN LENT

*Scripture:* Psalm 95, John 8:1-11

*Message:* “What’s The Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?: Jesus’ Grace: Am I Accepted?”

### MAR 15 4TH SUNDAY IN LENT

*Scripture:* Psalm 23, John 1:1-5, 14

*Message:* “What’s The Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?: Work: Where is God?”

### MAR 22 5TH SUNDAY IN LENT

*Scripture:* Psalm 130, John 13:1-5, 13-17

*Message:* “What’s The Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?: Example: What Brings Fulfillment?”

### MAR 29 PALMSUNDAY

*Scripture:* Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29, Matthew 27:27-31

*Message:* “What’s The Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?: Death: What about Suffering?”

### APR 5 EASTER SUNDAY

*Scripture:* Matthew 28:1-10

*Message:* “What’s The Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?: Resurrection: Is There Hope?”

## THE PRAYER CHAIN CONNECTION

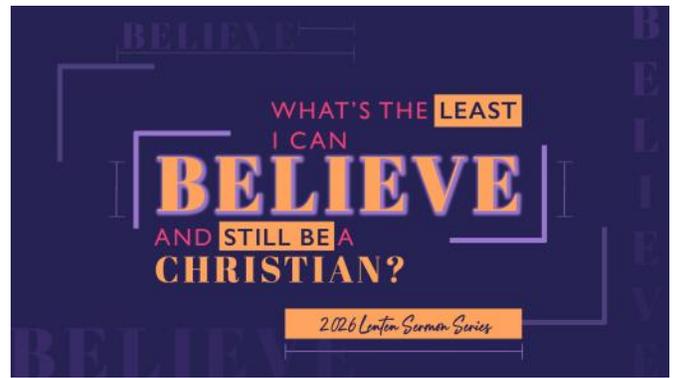
We pray for the names listed below and also for many other church members and their concerns, which remain confidential. You may call or text Diana Caldwell with your prayer concerns @ 330-265-5723.

*Please remember in prayer:*

Brad Ashley  
Noreen Ashley  
Tim Ashley  
The Becking Family  
Katie Ann Bickett  
Margarete Boschert  
Jim Brown  
John Calvarese  
Patti Calvarese  
Sue Canavan  
Jim Caplinger  
Patty Conely  
Rylin Davis and family  
Sean and Sara Doty  
Elaine Engle  
Debbie Fickes  
Karen Ford  
Darrell Goodson  
Eleanor Hall  
Sue Hamilton  
Alleen Hilbish  
Jim Jackson  
John James  
Nancy Johnson  
Anita Kelly-Lahrmer  
Zell Lambert  
Yvonne Larson  
Roberta Lewis  
Ron Mitchell  
Bob Poff  
David and Jackie Parker  
LTJG John Norton  
Heather Read  
Richard Reynolds  
Alice Sheeler  
Eddie Showalter

Lt. Maxwell Spear  
Richard & Karen Thomason  
Kim and Noel Walters  
Ensign 2 Kaitlyn Wetter  
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*



This year's Lenten Sermon Series is based on the book "What's the Least I Can Believe and Still be a Christian?" Pastor and author Martin Thielen has compiled a list of ten things people need to believe, and ten things they don't, in order to be a Christian. With an accessible, storytelling style that's grounded in solid biblical scholarship, Thielen shows how Christians don't need to believe that sinners will be "left behind" to burn in hell or that it's heresy to believe in evolution. And while we must always take the Bible seriously, we don't always have to take it literally.

At the same time, Christians do need to believe in Jesus—his life, his teachings, his death and resurrection, and his vision for the world. A great benefit of those beliefs is that they provide promising answers to life's most profound questions, including: Where is God? What matters most? What brings fulfillment? What about suffering? Is there hope?

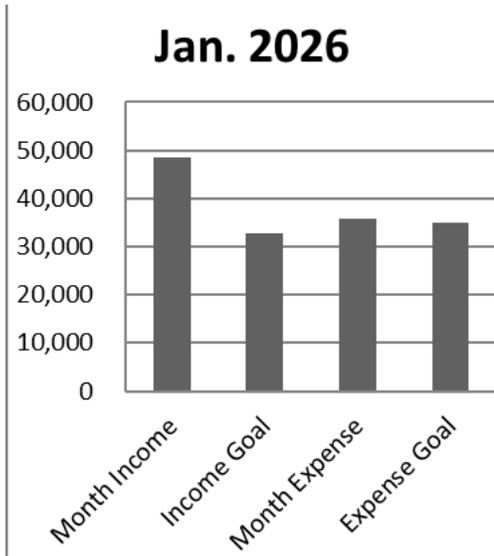
While the question of the title is crucial, it doesn't quite encapsulate what this sermon series will also ask which is, "What's the most I can do so people will know I am a Christian?" Join your church family on Sunday mornings beginning February 22<sup>nd</sup> for this unique sermon series.

### WITH SYMPATHY

**Our condolences to Donna and Wally Atwood for the loss of their daughter, Angela Hammelman, on Monday, January 19, 2026.**

**With great sadness we announce the death of Shirley Gron on Sunday, February 8, 2026.**

# MONTHLY FINANCIALS



January 2026 operating income of \$48,601 was \$15,850 **above** the monthly income need. Operating expenses for the month were \$35,709 resulting in a **surplus** of \$12,890 in January. We continue to hope for a strong 2026 with new and growing ministries, and 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.



One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is a vital special mission offering of the United Church of Christ. It connects you to disaster relief, refugee assistance, and development efforts around the globe. When dis-

asters strike, or when individuals are displaced due to violence or poverty, OGHS ensures immediate response and ongoing recovery.

Through your support, OGHS funds comprehensive development programs in areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture, food security, microfinancing, and women's empowerment. By partnering with Global Ministries and international response networks, OGHS maximizes its impact. Your contributions help meet urgent needs while addressing the root causes of vulnerability, ensuring long-term, sustainable solutions for affected communities. We will target our collection for March 15, 2026.

*First Congregational*  
**BIBLE & BREWS**

DATE	VENUE	TIME
<b>25 FEB</b>	THE VENUE BALLROOM 10 TALLMADGE CIR   TALLMADGE	<b>07 PM</b>
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF TALLMADGE		
<b>18 MAR</b>	WEST AVENUE TAVERN 67 WEST AVENUE   TALLMADGE	<b>07 PM</b>
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF TALLMADGE		

## Women's Fellowship March Luncheon

Join us for Bunco and Pizza! 🎱  
Thurs, Mar 5 | 12 PM, Fellowship Hall  
Never played before? No worries—  
you'll pick it up fast and have a blast!  
Bring \$5 to help cover the pizza  
Sign up today!

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

# SPAGHETTI DINNER



**4:30-7:00 PM**

**3RD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH**

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

### Women's Fellowship Spaghetti Dinner Update

We will not have a Spaghetti Dinner in February.  
Please plan to join us on March 19th for our next  
dinner.

# Choir NOTES

## CALLING ALL MUSICIANS!

Do you play an instrument, whether it's piano, guitar, violin, or any other? We invite you to share your musical gifts with our congregation! Your talent can help create meaningful worship experiences and inspire others. Whether you're a seasoned performer or just enjoy playing for fun, we would love for you to be part of our music ministry. Please call the church office at 330-633-4931 and let us know what instrument you play. Your contribution will make a difference!



## MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST



**Saturday, Feb. 28 @ 9:00 AM**  
**Saturday, Mar. 21 @ 9:00 AM**

# UNITED MINISTRIES YOUTH UPDATE

United Ministry has been on the move—putting our faith into action through service, love, and plenty of fun along the way!

A big thank-you to our congregation for supporting the Super Bowl Sub Sale. Your generosity helps make our summer mission ministry possible, and we hope you enjoyed every bite of those tasty subs (and the big game too)!

Huge applause for our youth who serve as lectors and liturgists on the third Sunday of each month! They are rocking it, and we are so thankful for the time, faith, and talents they share to help lead our worship.



Our youth have also been busy serving with creative hands and joyful hearts. This past month, they partnered with *Woodworkers with Heart Toy and Bed Builders*, a local non-profit that builds beds for children in need and turns leftover wood into toys for kids at Akron Children’s Hospital. With paint, care, and lots of love, our youth brought each piece to life—spreading joy and sharing Christ’s love in a hands-on, meaningful way. Want to learn more? Check them out at [woodworkerswithheart.org](http://woodworkerswithheart.org).

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Calling all youth! Come join us this month for *Faith in Action*, our Sunday in Service - as we kick off planning for April’s Youth Sunday Service - and, of course, there’s fun to be had at Youth Fellowship at Scene75. Bring a friend and come hang out with us!

**Grades 6-12**

## UM MAR. 2026

# SCHEDULE

<b>SUN 1</b>	<b>FAITH IN ACTION</b> 🕒 9AM 📍 Youth Room
<b>SUN 8</b>	<b>SUNDAY IN SERVICE</b> YOUTH SUNDAY PLANNING WITH LUNCH 🕒 11:15am-1pm 📍 YOUTH ROOM
<b>SUN 15</b>	<b>FAITH IN ACTION</b> 🕒 9AM 📍 Youth Room
<b>SUN 15</b>	<b>CONFIRMATION</b> 🕒 11:30AM -1PM 📍 David Bacon
<b>SUN 15</b>	<b>YOUTH FELLOWSHIP</b> 🕒 4-8PM 📍 Scene75
<b>SUN 22</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
<b>SUN 29</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>

UNITED IN CHRIST



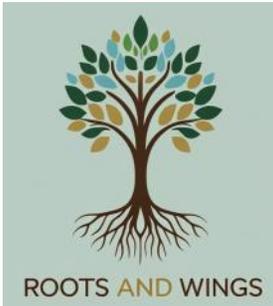
## Treehouse Preschool

Registration for the 2026-2027 school year is now open. We have only ten spots left in our preschool classes and eight left in our Me and My parent class (2.5 yr-olds and a parent or grandparent). If you know anyone with a toddler or preschooler looking for a preschool this fall, please spread the word.

We are also collecting raffle baskets for our March 'Party Like a Preschooler' nights, March 11 and 12th. If you are interested in providing a basket of gifts, treats, gift cards, books, etc., we would gladly take your donation. Please have the baskets to Wendy by March 1.



## Root and Wings



**Roots and Wings** is a 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. **See you at 4 PM.**

**March 8 – Games, games and more games**

**April 12 -Summer vision boards**

## Vacation Bible School

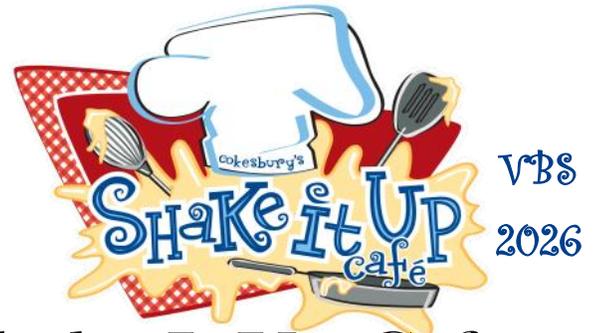
### Volunteers

**needed June 22– 25.**

Check your calendars and let Wendy know if you can help a few nights. We need crafters, story tellers, chefs, scientists, photographers, and musically talented people.

We also need youth helpers in grade 6th– 12th.

**SAVE the DATE**



## Shake It Up Café; God's Recipe for Life

When: 6/22-25

Time: 6-8 pm

Who can attend: anyone age 4-grade 5

## Worship Attendance

Jan. 25	no service	Feb. 8	148
Feb. 1	110	Feb. 15	120



## UPCOMING SUNDAYS

### Greeters

Feb. 22	Helen and Jack McKee
Mar. 1	
Mar. 8	Tom and Joe Labay
Mar. 15	Mark and Cathleen Clark
Mar. 22	
Mar. 29	Bill Westfall
Apr. 5	

### Altar Flowers

Feb. 22	Bill Westfall
Mar. 1	The Nagel Family
Mar. 8	
Mar. 15	
Mar. 22	
Mar. 29	
Apr. 5	Easter Flowers

Sign up in  
the hallway  
\$28 per  
arrangement

### Ushers



Feb. 22	Joe Labay, Ann and Patrick Hagan, Larry Robinson
Mar. 1	Larry Robinson, Dave Marconi, Tom Labay, Ken Caldwell
Mar. 8	Sandy Haydu, Karen Huth, Kim Darkow, Jane Charles
Mar. 15	Dave Marconi, Jane Charles, Sandy Haydu, Gary Myers
Mar. 22	Joe Labay, Ann and Patrick Hagan, Larry Robinson
Mar. 29	Larry Robinson, Joe Labay, Tom Labay, Ken Caldwell
Apr. 5	Larry Robinson, Dave Marconi, Tom Labay, Ken Caldwell

### SAVE THE DATE

Our Annual Meeting  
will be held on  
Sunday, Feb. 22, 2026,  
during worship.

FCC of TALLMADGE *services*

- Palm* SUN. MARCH 29 10 AM
- Maundy* THURS. APRIL 2 7 PM
- Good* FRI. APRIL 3 7 PM
- Easter* SUN. APRIL 5 6:30 AM & 10 AM

# MARCH 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 9:00 AM—Faith in Action 10:00 AM—Worship	2 12:30 PM—Ladies Study 2:15 PM—Chair Yoga 5:00 PM—Social Action Meeting 6:00 PM—Heritage 6:30 PM—Trustees	3 6:00 PM—Naranon	4 9:00 AM—Quilters 1:00 PM—Bible Study 7:00 PM—Cub Scouts	5 10:00 AM—WW 12:00 PM—WF Lunch (Danny Boy's) 6:00 PM—WW 6:00 PM—Bells 7:00 PM—Choir	6	7 7:30/9:00 AM—WW
8 9:00 AM—EC Meeting 9:00 AM—CE Meeting 10:00 AM—Worship 11:00 AM—Youth Sunday in Service 4:00 PM—Roots and Wings	9 12:30 PM—Ladies Study 2:15 PM—Chair Yoga 6:00 PM—Heritage	10 8:00 AM—Living Waters Meeting 6:00 PM—Naranon	11 9:00 AM—Quilters 1:00 PM—Bible Study 7:00 PM—Cub Scouts	12 HERALD DEADLINE 10:00 AM—WW 1:00 PM—Staff meeting 6:00 PM—WW 6:00 PM—Bells 7:00 PM—Choir	13	14 7:30/9:00 AM—WW
15 9:00 AM—Faith in Action 10:00 AM—Worship 11:30 AM—Confirmation Meeting 4:00 PM—Youth Fellowship	16 12:30 PM—Ladies Study 2:15 PM—Chair Yoga 2:30 PM—WF Meeting 6:00 PM—Heritage	17 6:00 PM—Naranon 6:00 PM—Card Making	18 9:00 AM—Quilters 10:00 AM—Herald Angels 12:00 PM—Book Study 1:00 PM—Bible Study 7:00 PM—Ash Wednesday Service	19 10:00 AM—WW 1:00 PM—Staff Meeting 4:30 PM—Spaghetti Dinner 6:00 PM—WW 6:00 PM—Bells 7:00 PM—Choir	20	21 7:30/9:00 AM—WW 9:00 AM—Men's Prayer Breakfast
22 10:00 AM—Worship	23 12:30 PM—Ladies Study 2:15 PM—Chair Yoga 6:00 PM—Heritage	24 6:00 PM—Naranon	25 9:00 AM—Quilters 1:00 PM—Bible Study 7:00 PM—Bible and Brews 7:00 PM—Cub Scouts	26 10:00 AM—WW 1:00 PM—Staff meeting 6:00 PM—WW 6:00 PM—Bells 7:00 PM—Choir	27	28 7:30/9:00 AM—WW
29 10:00 AM—Worship/ Palm Sunday 6:00 PM—WJHM	30 12:30 PM—Ladies Study 2:15 PM—Chair Yoga 6:00 PM—Heritage	21 10:30 AM—ACSG 6:00 PM—Naranon				

## EASTER FLOWERS ORDER FORM 2026

Easter morning, April 5, we will adorn the Chancel with beautiful flowers. We are offering a selection of colorful potted spring flowers along with the traditional Easter lilies. The cost is \$10.00 per plant. Please complete this form, then bring it to the church office or place it into the offering plate on Sunday morning. Checks may be made out to First Congregational Church. Names of those honored will be listed in the bulletin.

***The last day to order is March 9th.***

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

# of Easter Lilies \_\_\_\_\_ # of Tulips \_\_\_\_\_

# of Daffodils \_\_\_\_\_ Total amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_



Message  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please check one:      Pick up flowers \_\_\_\_\_      Donate your flowers \_\_\_\_\_

**If you are ordering flowers and donating money for music, PLEASE PROVIDE 2 SEPARATE CHECKS**

## EASTER SPECIAL MUSIC DONATION 2026

The 10:00 AM Easter service on April 5 will feature a brass quintet sponsored by our "Special Music Fund." Please consider contributing to this fund as a memorial or honorary gift. Simply fill out this form, then place it in the offering plate or return it to the church office with your check made out to First Congregational Church of Tallmadge. In the memo line at the bottom of your check, please write "Easter Special Music Donation." Names of those honored will be listed in the bulletin.

***Forms must be returned to the office by March 22nd.***

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Total amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**If you are ordering flowers and donating money for music, PLEASE PROVIDE 2 SEPARATE CHECKS**

Message  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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: February 18, 2026**

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### Spiritual and Pastoral Care Ministry Contacts

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

### Staff E-Mail Addresses

Rev. Daniel Doty	Senior Minister	<a href="mailto:seniorminister@fcctallmadge.org">seniorminister@fcctallmadge.org</a>
Cathy Cotter	Administrative Coordinator	<a href="mailto:info@fcctallmadge.org">info@fcctallmadge.org</a>
Wendy Brown	Director of Family Ministries	<a href="mailto:wbrownfcc@sbcglobal.net">wbrownfcc@sbcglobal.net</a>
Nancy Lynn Robinson	Choir Director / Organist	<a href="mailto:nrbgp@aol.com">nrbgp@aol.com</a>
Anne Pertick	Digital Minister/ Youth Ministries Coordinator	<a href="mailto:digitalministry@fcctallmadge.org">digitalministry@fcctallmadge.org</a> <a href="mailto:unitedministry@fcctallmadge.org">unitedministry@fcctallmadge.org</a>
Bill Hoover	Finance Administrator	<a href="mailto:bhooverfcc@sbcglobal.net">bhooverfcc@sbcglobal.net</a>
Teresa Snyder	Head Custodian	<a href="mailto:budrose42@yahoo.com">budrose42@yahoo.com</a>
Gary Marlow	Sunday Custodian	