

This I Believe: God Rises!

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister (tahrens@first-church.org)



One of my favorite National Public Radio pieces is “*This I Believe*.” Started in the 1950s by Edward R. Murrow, there is something clear and beautiful about the recorded submissions of the famous and not so famous. Like the opening notes of one of his symphonies, Leonard Bernstein says, “*I believe in people. I feel, love, need and respect people above all else, including the arts, national scenery, organized piety or nationalistic superstructures. One human figure on the slope of a mountain can make the whole mountain disappear for me. . . . We must believe, without fear, in people.*”

Juxtaposed to the maestro, is high school drop-out Elvia Bautista, who says, “*I believe that everyone deserves flowers on their graves. When I go to the cemetery to visit my brother, it makes me sad to see the graves - just the cold stones - and no flowers on them. I am the sister of Rogelio Bautista and I will say his name so you can hear it and be one more person who remembers him. I want everyone to remember all the boys (who have died in gang warfare) in my cemetery. When we remember we put flowers on their graves.*”

What is it that you believe? If I had one answer to record, it would go something like this:

I believe God rises. As an 8-year-old child, standing alone at the open casket of my grandfather, Hugo Kellermeyer, these words of scripture became real to me: “***I am the resurrection. I am the life. All who believe in me will never die.***” I had heard these words before, but in this moment as I beheld my grandfather’s corpse and I felt God’s presence rising within me, I came to believe that the spirit of my grandfather was alive - within me and all of us who loved him.

I came to believe God rises.

God rises in the sun rising each day. God rises in the crocuses fighting through frozen ground and finding their way to light, but not always to warmth. God rises in the hearts and minds of women and men who suffer oppression and overcome all odds to live, and breathe and claim their freedom. God rises when the eyes of one person meet the eyes of another and love is spoken and understanding is felt. God rises in laughter coming out of pain; strength coming out of weakness; faith coming out of a mustard seed; and a new born baby coming into this world against all reason and odds of survival. God rises in you and me, when we stand up, speak out and witness to truth. I believe God rises.

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Easter 2011 at First Church

Maundy Thursday

Dinner and Communion in Parish Hall – 6 p.m.

Worship in Sanctuary – 7:30 p.m.

Good Friday Worship – Noon - Broad Street Presbyterian Church

Rev. Dr. Janine Wilson Preaching

Easter Sunday

7 a.m. – Art Museum Front Steps; 9 and 11 a.m. – Sanctuary

10 a.m. – Congregational Brunch (Bring a dish to share, details on Page 4) – Parish Hall



'No Cross' – An Unpublished Blog from 2010 Sabbatical

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister

During the summer of 2010, I wrote a daily blog for the *Columbus Dispatch*. Some of my blogs were not published. Here is one I wrote following a night at a mosque in Cairo, Egypt. Through our newsletter, I will share other "unpublished" blogs in the coming months.

No Cross September 7, 2010

It is another hot night in Cairo. The fast has ended on this 28th night of Ramadan. The 30th night, the end of Ramadan, is so close I can taste it. Tonight, I sense that Abdul is struggling with something. For several weeks we have been growing in our friendship. But tonight, he has a question to ask me that has been troubling him. He doesn't know how to frame his question, so he blurts out, "Why do churches have crosses? It makes no sense."



I ask him to say more. He continues, "In the Quran, Jesus is a great prophet - the greatest outside of Mohammed (peace be upon him). But the truth of the Quran tells us that he ascended to God. He was not killed on a cross. He was not resurrected, as you claim. So, why do churches have crosses in them? I see it as a form of lying - and I know you wouldn't want to be part of a lie, Mr. Tim."

There is no cross in Islam. With no cross there is no resurrection of Christ in Islam. This is quite a dilemma. With no cross and no resurrection of Christ, the gap of understanding between Christianity and Islam is one that might not be able to be bridged. I say this with no judgment, just sadness.

If you, as a Muslim, believe the Quran to be the true and final revelation of God to humanity, and if you believe that no other truth can supersede this truth, then how can you reconcile the differences of understanding between the two faiths?

My Muslim friend is on the "straight path." In his heart of hearts, he believes I am on the wrong path following a faith built on this one foundational "lie" - that Jesus Christ was crucified, died, buried and on the third day he rose from the dead. Abdul and I break the fast tonight. We pass the food to each other. In silence we wonder, "Where do we go from here?"

(REV. AHRENS, Concluded from Page 1)

I believe Easter is the most glorious day of the year when God rises. I will spend every Easter singing "Jesus Christ is Risen Today!" and when my voice is gone and I sing no more, somehow, someday God will rise in spite of my lost voice. On Easter Sunday many years ago, unable to walk, talk, sing, or smile anymore, my grandmother Josephine Kellermeyer left her earthly frame, rose to heaven and reunited with Hugo. As we cried out, "Christ is Risen Indeed, Alleluia!" Josephine was already smiling with all the risen ones gathered at her side!

Yes, I believe God rises. And I believe God loves rising so much, that God raised his son from death to life to show us how to rise.

What do you believe? At First Congregational Church, we believe everyone's belief matters. We believe in testimonies of faith, not tests of faith. We believe that your journey of faith and life is sacred in every imaginable way.

Easter begins April 24 at 7 a.m. on the front steps of the Art Museum. It continues at 9 and 11 a.m. in our Sanctuary. In fact, every Sunday is considered a day of resurrection in the Christian calendar. I hope to see everyone who reads this in church.

Come rise with God! Come rise with us as we share this journey of faith together.

Letting Kids Succeed Donations Sought

Letting Kids Succeed, the summer camp that welcomes more than 150 young people to First Church, is returning this year. This year's camp begins in early June and runs until mid-August.

The program is looking for donations of games and equipment for use this summer. These would include:

- * Hopscotch play carpet
- * Platform stilts
- * Swing ball set
- * Six-pin bowling set
- * Toss across
- * Classroom dry erase board sets
- * Mates
- * Gears Gears Gears
- * Build and learn manipulative kit
- * Board games
- * Lego duplo brick set
- * Transparent marble run

We would appreciate any help you can give. Thanks!

The Nehemiah Action Assembly Needs You on May 2 at Vet's

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister

On Monday May 2, over 3,000 people from 52 congregations of the BREAD Organization will gather at Veteran's Memorial Hall to lift our voices for social justice, beginning at 7 p.m. I hope you are there with us. The First Congregational UCC Justice Ministry Network has commitments from 160 people to join in this exciting assembly. I believe we can top 200 people in our delegation!

BREAD will unveil our action plan for our new issue, "Crime and Violence." We are very concerned about the numbers of young men and women returning to prison after a first offense. We know that once you are in the prison pipeline, it is hard to get out. We also know that there are ways out for non-violent offenders that are cost-effective and save lives.



Franklin County has the worst record in the state of Ohio for helping first-time non-violent offenders out of the prison pipeline. We believe we can change this pattern. Currently, **we are wasting money and wasting lives** in Franklin County's prison system. It must stop.

I know you care about the problems facing our city and all of central Ohio. I know you want to reverse the trend and trajectory of crime and violence. Come and be a part of the solution. Come to the BREAD Nehemiah Assembly on May 2! We will meet at the church parking lot at 6:15 p.m. and carpool or you can go directly to Vet's and park free. Pick up a ticket in the office or see a member of the Justice Ministry Network! Come and make a difference on May 2.

First Church Co-Ed Softball Team Ready for a Title Run

The First Congregational Church "Crusaders" (Rev. Ahrens did not vote for this name) are ready for the 2011 season. The team will take Easter Sunday off, and begin action May 1. Come cheer us on. Bring your lawn chairs. We will play on Sundays until July 10. Games last one hour or until we "run rule" the other team. ☺

Our games are on the same field every week. It is Field #6 at the A. Busch softball fields just off Olentangy River Road (north of Henderson and south of Bethel, just east of 315). If you are coming from Henderson Road, it is

the first set of fields on the right. From Bethel, take the second left into the fields. Field #6 is in the northwest corner of the four fields. Here is the rest of our schedule:



May 1 – 4 p.m. – First Church vs. India Oak
May 8 – 2 p.m. – ORI vs. First Church
May 15 – 4 p.m. – First Church vs. Foul Balls
May 22 – 3 p.m. - Aspen DD Destroyers vs. First Church
June 5 – 2 p.m. – First Church vs. Aspen DD Destroyers
June 12 – 4 p.m. - India Oak vs. First Church
June 19 – 3 p.m. - Foul Balls vs. First Church
June 26 – 3 p.m. – First Church vs. Hudson Street Daggers
July 10 – 2 p.m. – First Church vs. ORI

Upcoming Sermons

Sermon Series "The Lord's Prayer"

April 24 – Easter – Matthew 28:1-10
"For the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory are Yours . . . Forever. Amen."



Sermon titles for the Easter Season

May 1 - Second Sunday of Easter
Sermon: TBA

Acts 2: 14a, 22-32, Psalm 16, I Peter 1:3-9, John 20:19-31

May 8 - Third Sunday of Easter -
"Keep Your Eyes Wide Open"

Acts 2:14a, 36-41, Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19, I Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35

May 15- Fourth Sunday of Easter
"A Sheep Dog's View of Christians Like This"

Acts 2:42-47; Psalm 23, John 10:1-10

May 22 - Fifth Sunday of Easter
"Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled"

Acts 7: 55-60; Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16; I Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14

May 29 - Sixth Sunday of Easter - Memorial Day
"Put Flowers on their Graves"

Psalm 66: 8-20, I Peter 3:13-22, John 14: 15-21

June 5 - Seventh Sunday of Easter (10 a.m. only)
Arts Festival Weekend

"TAMBO: That All May Be One"

Acts 1:6-14, Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35, John 17:1-11

Music Notes

By James E. Bobb, Minister of Music (jbobb@first-church.org)

April 2011

Our upcoming musical events include:

Sunday, May 1, 4 p.m. Robert Bates, organ

Robert Bates (www.organists.net/bates.html), associate professor of organ at the Moores School of Music, University of Houston, concludes the season on both the Kimball and von Beckerath organs.



Dr. Bates is a specialist in early French and Spanish organ repertoire, and in modern repertoire, being a composer whose works often include electronic and/or visual media. Dr. Bates has recorded the complete organ works of Brahms, Daquin and Correa de Arauxo. His three-CD set, Viaticum, contains eight of his own compositions. Herbert Huestis in The Diapason has written of Bates, "I discovered the genius of an artist committed to beauty and yes, the 'metaphysical' properties of this organ in our time. . . . This was a not-to-be-forgotten experience!"

Sunday, May 15, 9 p.m. Compline

God Doesn't Do Budgets

By Jim Fewlass, Treasurer

God doesn't do budgets. God does extravagant stewardship. God gives God's all. What does God expect of us? The widow gave a mite that was all she had. The rich young ruler when challenged to sell all he had and give it to the poor and follow Jesus went empty away. How strange his emptiness; he still had all his riches. The biblical compromise is the tithe or the first tenth of our income.

The first extravagant stewardship question is, "What is my income?" The second extravagant stewardship question is, "What is our income?"

My income or my family's income is easy to calculate. In our world what does a tithe mean? One suggested indicator is the total of what I give to church, charities,

medical, musical, artistic, educational, and assistance to people struck by natural disasters. My stewardship figured on this basis may use up the first tenth of my income quickly whether my income is small or large. Once, 25 percent of personal income was thought to be appropriate for housing. Many of us must spend a third to half or more of our income for shelter. Nutritious food costs more than the average person can afford. Therefore, for many of us the tithe may need to be updated for the 21st century.

Equally important how is First Church's stewardship in relation to God's extravagant stewardship? The challenge is two-fold. First, as a church what is our income? I don't mean pledges, unpledged, rentals, weddings et. al. Rather, what is the total of all of our combined personal incomes? If the church received 1 percent, or 5 percent or the unlikely 10 percent of that total, what would our stewardship base be?

Second, what is First Church's stewardship in relation to our income we do receive? What is our stewardship for mission, staff, education, property, music, art and care for all people who are entrusted to us? How do we compare to God's extravagance?



If you have been thinking that "the answer" to all these questions is coming at the end of this article, let me explain. I was a public school teacher and administrator for 37 years. I ask a lot of questions. I don't give answers.

As treasurer of First Church this year, my hope is to explore with you the pathways God would have us walk to reach our best personal and corporate stewardship together.

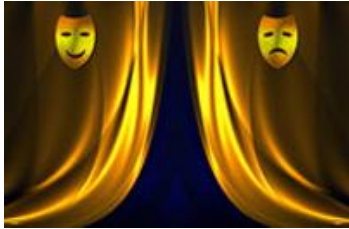
Easter Morning Brunch
Here is the list of what those attending the 10 a.m. Easter brunch should bring this Sunday:
Last names beginning with A-G: Bring muffins, bagels and cream cheese or doughnuts, etc.; H-R: Bring breakfast or salad dish; S-Z - Bring fruit. Beverages will be provided.

Christian Education

First Church to Present Annual Youth Cabaret on May 22

By Mark Williams, Christian Education Director
(mwilliams@first-church.org)

It's cabaret time again at First Church!



The First Church adults and youth will take the stage on Sunday, May 22, at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall. There will be amazing acts to entertain every age, and lots of food and fun. Proceeds

from the night will benefit the Youth Ministries' 2011 summer mission trip.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. They can be purchased in the office, during Fellowship Hour, with your offering or at the door.

Come celebrate the talent of First Church – and have a great time, too!

Butterflies Teach about Resurrection

The Christian Education Ministry uses the life cycle of the Painted Lady butterfly to illustrate the concept of resurrection. This lesson has been used for many years with great enjoyment.



The “baby butterflies” arrive as larvae. They must quickly be put into individual cups with food to last them through this part of their life cycle. We watch them grow and grow and grow until the worms look too big for their cups.

Within two weeks, the worm attaches itself to the lid of the cup and forms a chrysalis. They hang there for another week looking dead. There is no movement or visible change. The children have compared the chrysalis to a cave. If we're really lucky we will be able to observe the butterflies emerging from their chrysalis.

It takes about two hours for the butterflies to pump fluid to their wings and for them to dry and harden. At this point they can fly, and go looking for something to eat. We feed them with sugar water placed on flowers inside their net pavilion. They can live for 2-4 weeks.

Easter Sunday, if everything has gone as it should, all of the butterflies have hatched and are ready for release.

The release of Painted Lady butterflies is environmentally friendly because they will pollinate our flowers.

We release the butterflies after the 11 a.m. service. The children and the entire congregation are invited to the front steps of the church to release the butterflies. Upon release, the children often find the butterflies will land on them.

Adult Education offerings in May

May 1: "He is risen, now what?" Join First Church member and professional clinical counselor Jonathan Miller as he helps us incorporate the lessons of the resurrection into the rest of the church year and find practical ways to follow up good intentions with self-monitoring and reinforcement.

On **May 8 and 15** there will be two choices for Adult Education topics:

Glee: In 2009, the creators of the television series *Glee* brought forth a groundbreaking blend of musical, comedy and drama that would take network ratings by storm. *Glee's* first season attracted a following of individuals young and old, male and female, multiracial and of various sexual orientations. The diversity of this audience reflects *Glee's* own story: a spirited group of outcasts who form a community of radical acceptance. One of the reasons *Glee* resonates with so many different types of people is that its characters deal with universal emotions: insecurity, disappointment, acceptance, and love. In this study, participants are invited to use their own story, the story of *Glee*, and the greater Christian story to consider what it means to be an outcast, and how we as Christians are adopted into Christ's community of acceptance.

The Bible and the Qur'an: Have you ever wondered what the Qur'an says about the people of the Bible? Have you ever wondered how Christians read the Bible in relationship to other books of faith? Have you ever wondered about the hard issues of the modern world? Then this is the class for you.

The Rev. Deana Armstrong leads a two-week class during the Sunday School Hour where they will present texts from the Bible and the Qur'an regarding the following issues:

May 8 - Three Faiths, One Shared Belief and Seven Shared Practices

May 15 - Jesus: Christ or Prophet?

Columbus Arts Festival to Make Its Last Appearance

By Sarah Lange, Arts Festival Committee

This year, the Columbus Arts Festival turns 50 and will be spending its final year in the Discovery District. In the heart of the district, First Church has been in beat with the festival, offering music, art and refreshments to festival goers.



The church's Arts Festival Committee is looking forward to its fifth year as host to similar events this June 3, 4 and 5, and hopes you will find time to

enjoy a performance or two. The committee also will be looking for volunteers who can help serve and guide our guests that weekend. A schedule of events is below. Please consider how you can support the efforts of the First Church Arts Festival Committee.

Friday, 6/3, 7 p.m. – Progressive Concerts

Listeners will hear three short programs, each in a different location in the church. Music will range from show tunes to chamber music.

5-7 p.m. – Tea Room Open*, serving sandwiches and drinks; free trade coffee available for sale.

Saturday, 6/4, 7 p.m. – Choral Festival Concert

A feast of songs and rhythms from the Maggie Consort, the Columbus Women's Chorus, the Columbus International Children's Choir and the Columbus Women's Drum Chorus. Free admission! Donations benefit Habitat for Humanity.

4-7 p.m. – Tea Room Open, serving sandwiches and drinks; free trade coffee available for sale.

Sunday, 6/5, 10 a.m. – Worship Service (only service that day)

1 p.m. – Beckerath Organ Demonstration

A family-friendly presentation by Music Minister James Bobb.

11 a.m.-1 p.m. – Tea Room Open, serving sandwiches and drinks; free trade coffee available for sale.

***The Lesotho Photoshare Project by Cara Texler exhibits in Parish Hall.**

First Church Members to be Honored at Living Faith Awards

First Church members will be among those honored during the Living Faith Awards breakfast May 19.

This marks the 20th year of the Living Faith Awards, sponsored by the Metropolitan Area Church Council, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary. First Church member Arlene Reynolds will receive the Alvin R. Hadley Award for her commitment to the awards. The interfaith award will go to Cantor Jack Chomsky of Congregation Tifereth Israel.

As part of the celebration, former honorees also have been invited to attend, including a number from First Church. In addition to Arlene, they are: Grady Pettigrew; Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr.; Heather Biggers; Jack Davis; Tom Brownfield; and Robyn Petras. The late Dorothy Cromartie of First Church also will be recognized.

The breakfast will be held at Capital University's Harry C. Moores Campus Center, 2199 E. Main St. Doors open at 7 a.m. and the breakfast begins at 8 a.m.

Tables for the event may be reserved for a group, with your church and/or your name. Reservations are \$25 per person. Reservations should be sent to Gerrie Miller, registrar, 1453 Buck Trail Lane, Worthington, Ohio 43085, For information, email gkmiller314@hotmail.com or call 614-436-5026. Reservations must be made by May 13.

Missions Offering Schedule

In May, the undesignated loose offerings will benefit the following missions that First Church supports:



- May 1 - BREAD
- May 8 - Deep Griha
- May 15 - OCWM
- May 22 - Youth Mission Trip
- May 29 - Faith Mission

Next Newsletter Deadline

Articles Due: Monday, May 9, a noon. Email articles to: dmahoney@first-church.org. The *First Church News* is published the third Wednesday of each month.

Living in the Twilight Zone

(The following is from a blog written by Kevin Leidheiser, son of members Gary Leidheiser and Jane Chavers, in the first days after last month's earthquake and tsunami in Japan. Kevin and his wife, Riho, live in Tokyo. This has been edited for space.)

The past several days have felt like living in a Rod Serling-narrated otherworld. To recap my personal experience since 2:46 p.m. on Friday, March 11, 2011, would require writing a short novel. I will spare you that, but want to leave a comprehensive record of what I experienced this week.

Friday, March 11

It was a normal Friday afternoon. Slightly busier than normal at the office, I took the unusual step of writing a list of all the things to do before I left that day. It was six items long. I had only crossed off one translation job that I had finished in the early afternoon by the time two o'clock came along. A brainstorming session about how to encourage foreign tourists to come to Tokyo was scheduled from two o'clock. The meeting – about eight or nine strong – included several Japanese co-workers and the one other American guy.

At some point, I noticed the room wobbling slightly. At that point, the brainstorming died away and all eight of us sat there in relative silence waiting for the shaking to calm down. (We had just had a relatively long, but mild earthquake about a week before that lasted about a

At the point when most earthquakes start to die down, it very gradually began to grow stronger and stronger and started really feeling like a boat in a storm.

minute.) I thought it was a little out of the ordinary for this

type of swaying – it was very slow and rocked like a boat rocking on 2-D waves.

The odd thing about this latest quake was it just kept going and going, albeit slowly. Then, at the point when most earthquakes start to die down, it very gradually began to grow stronger and stronger and started really feeling like a boat in a storm. At some point, when the table started moving around, the girl next to me began to lose it, asking if we should actually protect ourselves (this is very uncommon in Japan, where most people don't bat an eyelash at a semi-powerful earthquake). I think we were all getting concerned by this point.

I remember hearing some crashing sounds in the background. This was our final signal to bolt. I couldn't

tell if they were buildings collapsing outside. I later found out it was the bookshelves and PC monitors falling over in the next room. People started heading toward the door and we scuttled toward the never used emergency fire escape stairwell.

From what I remember it was still shaking by the time we got all the way downstairs and outside. It really felt like it was not going to stop.



My Tokyo apartment after the earthquake.

the 8th floor and so on.

We got back to the office to clean up the fallen bookshelves and computers. One bookshelf that had been crammed with magazines was a huge mess and someone turned to me to say in Japanese, "Let's pretend we didn't see that." I nodded and move to my workspace. After a lull of what must have been 30 seconds, another uncomfortably large aftershock kicked in and that's when we realized it was time to haul out of there for good.

Once back out on the street, there was some awkward mulling about to figure out who is walking in which direction, as the general consensus is that work is done. At this point, several groups that thought they could get a taxi together went off to try to do so. I started back toward my house. It's about an hour-long walk that turns to a trudge, with growing numbers of people marching in one direction or another. As we get closer to Tokyo station and Nihombashi, the human herd becomes thick.

Although it seemed bad at the time, based on all the Tweets and Facebook posts I was reading on the way home, I imagined that the damage in Tokyo was nothing compared to what it was in Miyagi prefecture.

The entire company (200+) was safely evacuated to the nearby park to stand around freezing and sharing spotty information that was coming through Twitter and TV. About two hours later, after everyone was accounted for (and a few more large aftershocks), we were instructed to head back to the office in an orderly fashion. People on the 9th floor first, followed by

'Warm-Weather Book Club' to Make Its Return in May

By Jackie Dean

It's spring, so it must be time for the "Warm-Weather Book Club." We are a small group of women who meet the first Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. from May until September to discuss books and get to know one another.

But we would like to extend the invitation to *all* book lovers to join our group. That means male, female, young or old. If Wednesday evenings don't fit into your schedule, then let's have two groups going at once.



The first three books selections will be *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen, *The Last Talk with Lola Faye* by Thomas H. Cook and *Same Kind of Different* by Ron Hall and Denver Moore. We will decide later what the final books will be, but this will get you started.

Please contact Jackie Dean (868-0485) if you are interested in joining us as we spend the spring and summer building community and reading! The first meeting is Wednesday, May 4.

Appreciation Breakfast is May 15

The Christian Education Department will host a teacher and Worship Connections appreciation breakfast on May 15 in the Children's Library. All teachers and Worship Connection leaders will be recognized in both services that day.

Thursday Fellowships to Meet in May

The First Thursday Fellowship will meet May 5 at 10 a.m. at the home of Arlene Reynolds, 273 Erie Rd. in Clintonville. Each person will tell briefly about a book or other printed material she or he has enjoyed.

The Second Thursday Fellowship will meet May 12 in the Parlor. Following refreshments, Bill Heer will speak on his volunteer work with the Lower Lights Ministry in Franklinton in housing and support systems for women being released from prison. Everyone is welcome.

These will be the last meetings of the Thursday groups until fall. See you then!

Recent Gifts to First Church

By Bill Johannes and Jane Werum

Given to the Jackie Owen Memorial Music Fund in celebration of the life of Bob Roberts by:

Dr. Thomas Veregge



Given to the Starr-Wingfield Furnishings Fund in honor of Rupert "Twink" Starr by:

**Deborah Anderson
Gleva Stephens**

Given to the Pastor's Fund by:

Christopher Washington

Given to the Knight-Perry Fund by:

**Mr. And Mrs. David Ghose
Mark Williams**

Given to the Remembrance Fund in celebration of the life of Lori Horne by:

Peter Moore & Shaw Mumford

Your gifts, payable to the First Congregational Church, are very much appreciated. Celebration Gifts may be designated to the Remembrance Fund or an Endowment Fund and given in honor of a particular moment in the life of friend or family member. The gold-colored Celebration Gift folders can be found in the church pews and the church office.

Spirituality Network Plans Program

Our cultural heritage promotes images of the Divine that are overwhelmingly masculine. How do women recognize and claim that they, too, are created in God's likeness? Come for discussion, reflection, and exploration on a variety of topics that help to connect to uniquely feminine aspects of the Divine.

All of Me: Connecting Soul and Body

May 10, 2-4 p.m.; Facilitated by Mo Meuse
Location: Franklin Park Conservatory, 1777 E Broad St.
Suggested donation: \$5
RSVP at 614-228-8867 or spiritnetwk@ hotmail.com.

Through a series of experiences, including music, explorations of the gardens, walking meditation, and body prayer, explore the connection of body and soul.

Annual Gathering Set for June 10-11

Make plans to attend this year's Annual Gathering of the Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ at Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio, on June 10 and 11.

The keynote speaker will be the Rev. Tony Robinson, an ordained UCC minister, who has served four congregations. His present ministry is a multi-faceted one. He travels throughout North America as a speaker, teacher, preacher, consultant and coach serving congregations and their leaders. He has taught at several schools, including Emmanuel College/ Toronto School of Theology, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle University and Vancouver School of Theology.



Tony Robinson

Tony is the author of nine books, the most recent *Changing the Conversation: A Third Way for Congregations*, published in 2008. He is at work on two new books, one on preaching and leadership, the other on scripture and ethics.

He is a graduate of Willamette University in Salem, Ore. He holds a master's degree in European cultural and intellectual history from the University of Oregon. His Master of Divinity degree is from New York's Union Theology Seminary.

The schedule for this year's Annual Gathering can be found at www.ocucc.org.



Current Pledge Income

Pledges Budgeted - \$529,872

March Actual - \$34,733

YTD Actual - \$150,093.70

YTD Budget - \$132,468

Needed each month - \$41,268.99

March Mission Offerings

Witness for Justice - \$229.25

B.R.E.A.D. - \$318.35

Italian Children's Mission - \$549.65

S.A.R.A. - \$366.82

Good Samaritan - \$1,384

Bethlehem on Broad - \$271.57

Youth Mission Project - \$464

Outdoor Ministries - \$3

Total Mission - \$3,586.64

Member Happy May Birthdays

1: Allen Baker	20: Mike Weddle
2: Aimee Cerny	20: Todd Cunningham
3: Dan McCarty	20: Matt Myers
3: Matt Stevens	21: Martha Loy
5: Rick Sayre	21: Carol Gallagher
5: Marc Danneberger	22: Valerie Stichter
6: Robyn Petras	23: R. Guy Cole
7: Morgan Shaw	23: Melissa Murdock-Wegandt
8: Steven Deliman	23: Alex Heer
9: Cheryl Hoskinson	24: Dorothy Vish
10: Anne Hudson	24: Gil Kirk Jr.
11: Marie Pfeiffer	24: Justin DeWolfe
11: Marilyn Minter	25: Tim Brownlee
11: Paul Fishel	25: Brian Cave
13: Bill Wirsching	26: Bill Heer
14: Carol Woodard	26: Luke Ahrens
15: Donald Calhoun Jr.	27: Sandy Bennett
15: Andrew MacGregor	27: Charles Roach
16: Ardis Postle	28: Bill Johannes
16: Greer Aeschbury	28: Jessica Rannow
18: Nancy Burba	29: John Zahn
18: Brooke Wilson	29: Arlene Reynolds
18: Kyle Danneberger	29: Nancy Williams
19: Bob Lortz	29: Kay Metz
19: Betty Powell	29: Eric Van Gorden
19: Dave Wharton	30: Karla Lortz
19: Traci Shaw	30: Mike Petras
19: Angie McLaughlin	30: Peter Worley

Member Happy May Anniversaries

3: Fran and Bruce Panek
8: Nancy and Larry Braverman
8: Laura and Lance Collins
10: Elizabeth and Mike Bockbrader
11: Lori and Ben Horne
11: Darla Luebbe and Elaine Stewart
12: Sarah and Bill Lange
13: Beth and Joe Iannarino
16: Beth and Andy Cooke
18: Debbie and Colin Thompson
19: Linda and Ralph Mumford
19: Nancy Loy and Tom Worley
22: Jessica and Mario Catenacci
23: Elizabeth Hubbard and Sam Spofforth
28: Lola and Bill Edwards
28: Ardis and David Holt

If we miss your birthday or anniversary, contact Denny Mahoney at 228-1741, ext. 17, or dmahoney@first-church.org

Calling All Graduates!

If you or a family member is graduating from high school or college this year, send us some information including name, school the person is graduating from, degree and possible future plans.

We will be recognizing our graduates in late May or early June. We'll run a listing in June's newsletter. Send the information to dmahoney@first-church.org. You also may include a photo (electronic image only).

Church Calendar

Sunday, April 24 (Easter Sunday)

7 am – Worship – Art Museum Steps
9 am - Early Worship Service - San
10 am – Choir – Choir Room
10 am – Congregational Brunch - PH
11 am - Worship Service – San

Monday, April 25

6:30 p.m. – Stephen Ministers – Adult Library
7 p.m. – Budget and Finance – LC

Tuesday, April 26

12 pm – Card Care Ministry – LC
7 pm – Personnel - PFR

Wednesday, April 27

7 pm – Adult Education Committee – LC

Thursday, April 28

6:15 pm – First Church Ringers – Gallery
7:30 p.m. – Choir – Choir Room

Friday, April 29

Family Retreat – Templed Hills

Saturday, April 30

Family Retreat – Templed Hills

Sunday, May 1 (Family Retreat @ Templed Hills)

9 am – Treble/Teen Choir – Choir Rm
9 am – Worship – PH
10 am – Education Hour – Rooms C and D
10 am – Choir – Sanctuary
11 am – Worship – San
12 pm – Fellowship Hour – PH
4 pm – Softball – Busch Fields
4 pm – Congregational Concert – San
6 pm – Sonreir - PH

Monday, May 2

7 pm – BREAD Event – Veterans Memorial

Tuesday, May 3

12 pm – Card Care Ministry – LC
5:30 pm – Sacred Earth – LC
6:30 pm – Children’s Education – Ed Wing, Room D
7 pm – Deacons – LC
7 pm – Mission Committee – PFR
7:30 pm - Youth Ministry Team – Ed Wing, Room C

Wednesday, May 4

11 am – Book Study – Parlor
12 pm – Arts Festival Committee – PFR
6 pm – Warm-Weather Book Club – Parlor

Thursday, May 5

10 am – First Thursday Fellowship – Arlene Reynolds home
6:15 pm – First Church Ringers – Gallery
7:30 pm – Choir – Choir Room

Sunday, May 8

9 am – Treble/Teen Choir – Choir Room
9 am – Early Worship – PH
10 am – Choir – Sanctuary
10 am – Education Hour – Rooms C and D
11 am – Worship Service – San
12 pm - Fellowship Hour – Parlor
2: pm – Softball – Busch Field
6 pm – Sonreir – PH
6 pm – Middle School Group – Middle School Room

Monday, May 9

7 pm – Trustees – LC

Tuesday, May 10

12 pm – Card Care Ministry – LC
6 pm – Music Committee – Parlor

7 pm – Executive Committee – PFR

Wednesday, May 11

12 pm – Arts Festival Committee – PFR

Thursday, May 12

10 am – Second Thursday Fellowship - Parlor
2 pm – Art Committee – Parlor
6:15 pm – First Church Ringers – Gallery
7:30 pm - Choir – Choir Room

Saturday, May 14

10 am – First Church Quilters – LC

Sunday, May 15

9 am – Treble/Teen Choir – Choir Room
9 am – Worship – PH
10 am – Choir – Sanctuary
10 am – Education Hour – Rooms C and D
11 am – Worship – San
12 pm – Fellowship Hour – PH
4 pm - Softball – Busch Fields
6 pm – Sonreir – PH
9 pm – Compline - San

Monday, May 16

6:30 pm – Technology Committee – LC

Tuesday, May 17

12 pm – Card Care Ministry – LC
7 pm – Council – LC

Wednesday, May 18

12 pm – Arts Festival Committee – PFR

Thursday, May 19

6:15 pm – First Church Ringers – Gallery
7:30 pm – Choir – Choir Room

Saturday, May 21

9 am – House and Grounds – PFR

Sunday, May 22

9 am – Treble/Teen Choir – Choir Rm
9 am – Worship – PH
10 am – Education Hour – Rooms C and D
10 am – Choir – Sanctuary
11 am – Worship – San
12 pm – Fellowship Hour – PH
3 pm – Softball – Busch Fields
7 pm – Youth Cabaret - PH

Prayers

May Fellowship Hour

May 1: Micah
 May 8: Numbers
 May 15: Proverbs
 May 22: Psalms
 May 29: Romans

May Acolyte Schedule

May 1: Emma Rau and Ben Allen
 May 8: Merry Roach and Jack Koscher
 May 15: Emily Cooke and Adam Wade
 May 22: Joe Spofforth and Dylan Hopcraft
 May 29: Annie-Rose Cooke and Courtney Batchelor
 (Schedules online at www.first-church.org)

Prayer Request: Please let us know of a prayer concern for yourself, a family member or other church member by calling the Rev. Timothy Ahrens at 614.228.1741, ext. 13, by using prayer request cards found in each pew or by emailing tahrens@first-church.org.

Please pray for those who continue to walk through grief and loss, for those battling illness and addictions in their families, for all serving in Iraq and elsewhere and for others in need. Please offer prayers for those who are lonely, lost and hurting. Pray for our nation as we face all too much anxiety, fear and uncertainty with faith, hope and love. May God bless you in your giving and in your living in Christ's love and grace. Amen.

Weddings

April 9 - Lisa Bongiorno and Scott Phillips
 April 9 – Rebecca Korb and Jason Varey

Fellowship Hour Beverage Sales



Coffee and tea sales will be available on May 1 and 15 during Fellowship Hour. This is a UCC coffee project initiative and your participation is greatly appreciated.

~ Remember Your Loved Ones ~
With a Dedication of Flowers
 Contact Marty Worth at 614.228.1741, ext. 12,
mworth@first-church.org

Worship CDs Available: We provide copies of worship services on CDs. The CDs are available in the literature rack outside the church office after worship. A \$1 donation for the CD can be left in a container on the church office counter.

Church Staff

Timothy C. Ahrens.....Senior Minister
 Janine Wilson.....Associate Minister
 James E. Bobb.....Minister of Music
 Mark S. Williams.....Director of Christian Education
 G. Dene Barnard.....Organist/Choirmaster Emeritus
 Sharon Leidheiser.....Business Administrator
 Martha Worth.....Program Manager
 Bill Beckett.....Building Manager
 Denny Mahoney.....Office Manager
 Kelvin Murphy.....Custodian
 Frank Wall, William Lee.....Custodians
 Nikki Boop, Rosemary Pawandiwa.....Nursery
 DeAndree Norris.....Nursery
 Linda Mumford.....Wedding Coordinator
 Jane Chavers.....Wedding Coordinator
 Fran Panek.....Wedding Coordinator

Church Council

David Holt..... Moderator
 Gerry Worth.....Vice-Moderator
 Judy Smith, Bev Cook.....Secretary/Assistant
 Jim Fewlass, Cindy Conn.....Treasurer/Assistant
 Sandy Bennett, Neal Brower.....Administration/Assistant
 Melissa Prendergast.....Church Growth
 Priss Endo, Tanya Miller.....Education/Assistant
 Wally Giffen, Charlie Weaver...House & Grounds/Assistant
 Fran Panek, Bruce Panek.....Mission/Assistant
 Jackie Dean, Abby Cave.....Parish Life/Assistant
 Mary Weaver.....Senior Deacon
 Elaine Warren.....Deacon
 John Deliman, Jim Gallagher...Music, Arts, Heritage/Asst.
 Melody Leidheiser.....Nominating Chair
 Sheldon Taft.....Trustees
 Emma Welsh-Huggins.....Member-at-large
 Tom Brownfield.....Member-at-large

The First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
444 E. Broad St.
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3821

DATED MATERIAL - VERY IMPORTANT

Please Deliver By: Monday, April 25, 2011

TO:

[Empty dashed box for recipient information]



The First Congregational Church, UCC

444 E. Broad St., Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: 614.228.1741 FAX: 614.461.1741
Email: home@first-church.org Web site: www.first-church.org
Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Closed Major Holidays

“An Open & Affirming Faith Community”

SUNDAY WORSHIP HOURS

Worship at 9 a.m. ~ Parish Hall
Worship at 11 a.m. ~ Sanctuary