

First Church News

First Congregational Church, UCC
Columbus, Ohio

"Enter to Worship - Depart to Serve"

July 2011
Vol. 159, No. 7



Tom Luff Joins First Church as Building Manager

By the Rev. Dr. Janine Wilson, Associate Minister
(jwilson@first-church.org)

It is a joy for me to share that our search for the new building manager of First Congregational Church has come to an end! I smiled when I parked my car on a recent morning and the space for building manager had Tom Luff's car parked in it!

Tom was selected from a pool of 26 applicants for the position. Following the long hours of careful scrutiny of resumes, several telephone calls, followed by interviews with candidates conducted by Wally Giffen and myself, we narrowed the field. Five candidates came in to interview in person. Four candidates had a second interview with the two of us, along with our senior minister and personnel moderator. From this pool we narrowed the field again and two then interviewed with staff. The selection of Tom for the position was unanimous.



Tom Luff

Tom is a graduate of OSU with a bachelor's degree in environment and natural resources with a specialization in policy and management. He has previously worked as an independent contractor in construction, remodeling and restoration of residential and commercial buildings and exhibit fabrication and installation. He also has worked for the Ohio Rural Water Association, providing outreach and assistance in rural Ohio communities with water and wastewater infrastructure needs.

Tom has experience working collaboratively with area leaders to secure funding, as well as experience as liaison with multiple federal and state funding agencies. In earlier days, he worked as a technician, skilled laborer, clerk and administrator engaging in renovation and repair of sale and lease properties, network administration and tech support, installation and management of security system, maintenance estimates, invoicing and accounts receivable. His cross-section of experiences gives him the broad base that our busy historical building, property and people require now

and into the future's broadening way.

In addition to his work-related experiences, Tom also has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, Huckleberry House, Meals on Wheels and the Hiram House/United Way. He has a heart for hands-on ministry which, along with his always expanding skills, will be a blessing to First Church and our shared ministry in Columbus and beyond.

Tom, we welcome you to your new workplace and to this fun and faithful staff and congregation. We look forward to working with you and getting to know you, your wife, Kristen, and your children, Kiera and Jamison.

General Synod 28

Flash Mobs, Mission: 1, Pitts and Imagined Possibilities

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

I was honored to travel with my daughter Sarah Ahrens to General Synod 28 in Tampa, Florida. For five very full days, delegates and guests were treated to great music, great worship, great preaching, many speakers, workshops, 11 resolutions for consideration and voting, a march for farm workers calling for a one cent an hour increase in pay and even a "UCC Flash Mob" (view at www.ucc.org).

Surrounded by a desert scene complete with tents, sand, and palm trees, we were challenged to **"Imagine What's Possible,"** the theme for General Synod 28. We were called on to recognize and support the adoptions of LGBT families and to support men and women in the international LGBT community who are persecuted and often killed because of their sexual orientation. **(Continued on Page 3)**

Inside

From the Pastors - 2
News - 3-9
Christian Ed - 5
Anniversaries - 9

Birthdays - 9
Calendar - 10
Prayers - 11
Staff/Council - 11

From the Pastors

Welcome to Our 2011-12 Interns!

By the Rev. Dr. Janine Wilson, Associate Minister
(jwilson@first-church.org)

I was asked a great question this morning: "What does it mean to be an 'intern' here?"

I know First Church has had many interns in the past, but if you were not here (and even if you were), the question reminds us how great it is to have each new student serving in our midst.



I'll start with Miriam Webster's definition (I'm in that kind of mood today – go for the formal, then the informational.) An intern is "an advanced student or graduate usually in a professional field (as medicine or teaching) gaining supervised practical experience." From now until next summer we have two new interns on our staff – Jess Peacock and Abby Salak.

Jess began this month and Abby will begin in August. Each of them has one-half of their job description here the same and the other half of their job description unique – both will continue to work with our Mark and our youth program. In addition, Jess will also be discovering more about social justice as he works with Equality Ohio and Tim.

Abby will be working with Mark and the youth, as well as focusing part of her time growing in the areas of congregational care and outreach. We are looking forward to opening some new links with the young adults. Jess is using his work here to meet his field education requirement with the Methodist Theological Seminary in Delaware, Ohio. Abby will do her field education requirement in conjunction with later studies. My own job description gives me the joyful opportunity to be supervisor to both of them.

As a United Church of Christ congregation, we have a wonderful challenge to live in covenant in multiple directions; having interns is one of them. Together, we will seek to discover how God is calling us to open our eyes, heart and minds in the areas of youth and young adult ministry as well as community care and outreach.

At the same time, Jess and Abby will have a chance to be covenantal partners with God, us and the community, as they take part in the widening love of God in this congregation and throughout surrounding community.

We are blessed to have this opportunity to take part in their journey as they assist us in our own journey as a

congregation. If you have not yet met them, I encourage you to make time for it. They are both bright and articulate and enjoy sharing their faith with others.

With joy,
Janine

Wednesday Book Study to meet August 3

The Wednesday book study, which meets the first and third Wednesday of the month from 11 a.m. to noon, decided to meet in July and will meet again August 3 in the Parlor.

We will begin again on September 7. We are looking at a number of books including, Reinhold Niebuhr's classic *Moral Man and Immoral Society* and Martin Buber's *I and Thou*. Titles for the first book in September will be announced in the August newsletter. If you have book ideas, please email me at tahrens@first-church.org. Thanks to the 20+ folks who faithfully join us! There is always room for more! Keep reading! - Rev. Tim

Senior Minister Office Hours - Open to All

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister

During my time as senior minister, I have posted office hours.

In recent years, I have gotten away from that because people set up appointments with me when they wish to talk. However, some have requested that I set these posted hours once again. So, for the remainder of the year, I am posting office hours.

I still need folks to email in and sign-up for times if you would like to talk. But here are times that I am blocking off for office hours (except when I am on vacation or out of state on church-related mission and ministry). I will fill up these times with staff and others, if folks don't call in, email in, etc.

My email is tahrens@first-church.org; my direct phone line is: **614-228-1741, ext. 13.**

I look forward to hearing from you.

Office Hours – August 8 - December 20

Mondays – 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Third Monday nights - 8:30-9:30 p.m.

Fourth Monday nights - 8-9 p.m.

Wednesdays - 3-5 p.m.

Saturdays by appointment only.

(SYNOD, Concluded from Page 1)

Among the 11 resolutions, the UCC was called upon to support clergy health care, recognize the baptism of Christians in all our Roman Catholic and Protestant communions, stop the hostility toward our Muslim brothers and sisters, and support a youth covenant which will lift up the leadership and gifts of youth in the church. All of these motions passed with huge support.

We were also called upon to participate in Mission:1. Mission:1 will take place from November 1-11, 2011 - or 11-1-11 to 11-11-11. We are called to dedicate our church and its mission to feeding the hungry, raising funds for this effort and making a difference in this united

effort of mission across the country and the world. More will be shared in the coming weeks.



Leonard Pitts

I was particularly moved by *Miami Herald* columnist Leonard Pitts Saturday morning speech. He challenged General Synod 28 participants to make headlines on behalf of social justice concerns. What follows are some highlights from Leonard's speech as recorded by Jeff Woodward.

Speaking on the podium between two large-screen images of photos taken from the NASA's Hubble Space Telescope, Pitts said he marvels each time he views them. "I have always found these pictures of immense value to me when imagining the possibilities," he said. "There is something humbling in these images; these clusters of stars, these swirling masses of gases, these spiraling galaxies. These images represent the smallest corner of God's possibilities."

Pitts read in its entirety a *Herald* column he wrote nine years ago about a friend, the Rev. David Bowers, who refocused his ministry toward reducing the alarming murder rate among young people in Washington, D.C. "Some people think this preacher was a chapter short of a complete Bible, if you get my drift," Pitts said to laughter. "I told him he was crazy, and he said, 'You're right.' Then I told him that Martin Luther King Jr. was crazy, too."

Pitts cited Oprah Winfrey, Bill Clinton, James Earl Jones – even Moses – as among those who've overcome great odds. "Sometimes we obsess about our impediments and overlook our possibilities. Everyone has an impediment to overcome – it can either define you or spur you on."

Pitts said organized religion has a way of taking God and putting him into a box. "It has a tendency to imprison him in the littleness of human imagination. We seem to have this idea of a God that we have created in our own image; a God that stretches only to our own likes and dislikes; a God who thinks what we think, wants what we want, sees as we see, and does as we do. . . . To consider those images of the swirling cosmos is to recognize that if God is what we say God is, he is God over all of that and an infinity more. He is the Creator of creation itself, and therefore, by definition, cannot be contained within the boxes that you and I construct for him."

Pitts' emotional tone elevated when he decried a world where "the only thing growing faster than poverty is the lack of compassion for those trapped in it."

"We live in a world where the inability to reason has become a badge of honor, and people are proud to parade their ignorance and call it truth," said Pitts. "When did it become possible for a Glenn Beck to declare that preaching a social gospel – which, for my money, is the only kind of gospel worth preaching – is a sign of communism and totalitarianism? When did it become possible for him to say that and not be drowned out by protests of people of faith who get up every day and serve the betterment of society?"

See related
articles on Pages
4 and 7

Pitts also lashed out at the reality that wars are somehow financed and tax breaks are afforded multi-national corporations and multi-million-dollar individuals. "But there is never money enough to provide health care for a child growing up on the other side of town," said Pitts to applause.

"But here's the best question," he said. "What are people of faith going to do about it? I submit to you that the beginning of an answer comes with the courage to imagine."

Sarah and I were among a huge delegation of Ohio folks from our five associations. Sarah was Ohio's youngest delegate. We will be sharing more in relation to mission and ministry as we imagine what's possible for First Church and all our sisters and brothers across the denomination

UCC's General Synod Adopts Church Youth Ministries Covenant

The following are eight principles for a covenant with youth in the church adopted by the UCC General Synod in Tampa. This was presented by the Eastern Ohio Association of the UCC. The resolution continues from this point on and lifts up actions of the synod. The whole document can be found at www.ucc.org.

1. We will pray and support.

We believe that our youth workers need spiritual support in their work with young people.

We promise to pray for our youth workers and keep their needs a high priority in church prayer life.



2. We will acknowledge the importance of gifts and God's call.

We believe that gifts and call are best discerned in the context of the faith community.

We promise to provide opportunities for prayerful discernment.

3. We will provide opportunities for retreat and reflection.

We believe that taking time to think and pray is just as essential for our youth workers as organizing events and meeting young people. We promise to provide opportunities for our youth workers to use part of their schedules for retreat, reflection, worship and personal development.

4. We will provide ongoing training and development.

We believe that maintaining the gifts and skills of the youth workers is an ongoing process and that it is important to continually invest in professional development. We promise to set aside time and money to provide this for our youth workers.

5. We will give a full day of rest each week.

We believe that taking regular time off helps maintain our youth workers' passion and energy for their work with young people. We promise to actively encourage our youth workers to take a day away from their role each week.

6. We will share responsibility as a priesthood of all believers.

We believe that having a youth worker does not release the rest of the church from our responsibilities toward young people. We promise to encourage everyone to play a part in volunteering, praying for and supporting young people.

7. We will celebrate and appreciate.

We believe it is vital to acknowledge what our youth workers are doing and the commitment they have made to work with young people in our church. We promise to make sure our youth workers know they are appreciated and we will celebrate their achievements.

8. We will strive to be a just employer.

We believe it is important to have clear structures and procedures for recruiting and employing youth workers, and to provide supportive management structures that are fair and just. We promise to follow non-exploitive practices in the way we employ our youth workers.

First Church Choir to Sing at National Cathedral in August

Thirty-eight members of the First Church Choir, plus 12 spouses and partners, will travel to the National Cathedral (Episcopal) in Washington, D.C., next month, where we will sing the two Sunday morning Eucharists and the afternoon Evensong on Sunday, August 14.

We leave church on Thursday afternoon, arriving at the historic Churchill Hotel on Connecticut Avenue around midnight. That will give us all day Friday for sightseeing and a group tour of the U.S. Capitol. We spend Saturday afternoon rehearsing in the cathedral, and return there Sunday at 7:45 a.m. for a long day of worship and singing together.

Six anthems, two chanted Psalm settings, sung prayers and responses, and of course, hymns are part of the rich tapestry of music prepared for these liturgies. We have been blessed to be able to raise the funding for this partly through our own contributions and partly through our use of the Kroger card program for our music ministry. Keep us in prayer that weekend.

Soli Deo gloria.
Jamie Bobb, Minister of Music

A Quick Trip – But What a Blessing!

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

Jamie Bobb, Minister of Music, and I, made a quick trip July 12 to Sunset Shores Retreat Center in Vermilion, Ohio, to visit and work alongside our youth and adult chaperones during their mission trip. What a blessing!

The group was divided into three major work projects. One was hanging drywall, another clearing and installing a new fence line and the third was digging holes to construct an outdoor worship center on the property. I must say that we were impressed with the work ethic of our youth and we were so glad we made the trip and to work with them.



But I was also reminded that all of you, our congregation, were there too. Through your donations and prayers and our commitment to this ministry, you made this week happen. It was good to see our group working hard and also seeing them swimming in Lake Erie and paddling in kayaks. To watch them discover how to use tools, cook and interact with members from the Vermilion church also was a blessing.

The retreat center is used for many youth groups and retreats throughout the year but it also is used for the homeless during the cold winter months. More information about the entire week will be in the August newsletter with photos. Thank you First Church for your support of the youth ministry!

Education Department Needs Volunteers

Would you be willing to sit in an air-conditioned room in the middle of August sorting construction paper, scissors, filling glue bottles, making sure staplers worked and cutting out crafts? If yes, we have a chair for you during the week of August 15-18!

We need volunteers to get the classroom supplies ready for our children and youth ministries this fall. Please contact Mark Williams at mwilliams@first-church.org or call 228-1741 for more information or if you can help!

Mission Trip Prayer

This is a dinner-time prayer offered by Jonathan Miller during the youth mission trip to Vermilion, Ohio:

"Lord, as we gather at the end of our last full day of work at Sunset Shores, we thank You, not only for this meal, but for the company we share.

We pray as those lucky enough to work indoors, sitting down, at our studies and careers. We thank You for this chance to measure, cut and dig - to repair, rather than destroy and to build up, rather than to tear down. We thank you for this time to work, not just with our hands, but with the certain knowledge that others will have lasting benefit from our labors.

This week, we gained new appreciation for the craftsperson's skill and effort. When we depart, may we have new appreciation for your own construction. On your Judgment Day, when it is we who will be measured, may You find that our hearts are as level and true as the post holes we dug, the drywall we cut and the stakes we drove.

In Jesus' name, we pray."

UCC 'Day with God and Self' is Sept. 10

The next "A Day with God and Self," a day-long retreat for educators, clergy and laity offering an opportunity for individual and group spiritual guidance, will be held Saturday, September 10, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the UCC Ohio Conference's Pilgrim Hills Pettyman Center.

Registration must be received two weeks before the retreat date. Call the Ohio Conference office at 800-282-0740 to request a brochure or you can print a registration form at www.ocucc.org to complete and return with your check.

Make Plans to Attend the First Church Annual Picnic Sunday, August 28, After Worship on the Church Lawn

Church Growth Working to Pair Members with Ministries

By the Rev. Dr. Janine Wilson, Associate Minister
(jwilson@first-church.org)

As a pastor, summer is a great time to look over where we have been and listen to others sharing where they feel God is calling us next. One (of many) groups engaged in these conversations is Church Growth. Just last week Melissa, Abby and I were discussing how great it will be when our new computer program is fully functioning. It will help us match the gifts, skills and joys with our new members with opportunities that range from alerting them to a great new class on the horizon to a way to participate in all forms of ministries. By fall we will be able to match people with groups who may have been hoping, and even praying, for someone with a particular talent to be included in a particular ministry or a commission.

Our beginning data entries are newer members. We want to assist the congregation and the new members in getting to know one another as partners in ministry. When we share our gifts and skills we also make new friends and learn more about the church in which we enter to worship and depart to serve. If any of you have been hoping your special skills and talents could be put to use sooner rather than later and you are not a newer member, just let me know and I'll be sure to enter your data in as soon as possible too. Eventually, all active members will be in the new program data base.

I've also been enjoying my summer reading on church growth. Have you ever heard what brings people in to a new church? One author (Townes) reminds us that 2% come to a new church because of advertising; 6% because of the pastor/s; 6% enter through evangelistic outreach....don't be discouraged by the low percentages - the best is yet to come....and **86% are brought to church through friends and relatives!** What great news!

It's pretty cool to notice that the earliest followers of Jesus did the same thing. In a world of change, one of the most important things in all of life remains the same. We discover the community of Christ, through the community itself retelling the story of their own journey, their story of the place where sorrow was comforted or hope refreshed. As brothers and sisters of faith, we bring those we love to the community we love and participate in – and the church grows wider and deeper.

It makes sense when we stop to think about it. It is us, one by one, who have learned that coming together to worship truly is different than being alone. Some weeks

we come to be fed and other weeks we come to feed someone else – maybe through a smile, a kind word, a positive challenge to help them take a risk. We also offer one of the most amazing gifts and skills of this congregation – to be welcoming. You make it a reality day in and day out -- no matter who you are, where you have been, or even if you are not sure where you are going, you are welcome in this place. Then, together we go out into the world to serve – what a blessing to be part of the community journey.

So embrace the power God has given you this week – tell a friend why you come to church. Invite them to come with you – to worship or a concert, to the children's play group, the picnic or an emerging small group. You will be blessed in the offering and they may just surprise you and ask what time the fun begins. And if you or a friend would like to become a new member, **our next new members class is Saturday, August 13, 9 a.m. to noon.** Attend and learn more about who we are, what we believe and how we seek to live it out. Sign up is as easy and an email to jwilson@first-church.org or call 614 228-1746, ext 21.



Lantern Fellowship Set For Sept. 16-18

The next Lantern Fellowship retreat of the Ohio Conference UCC will be held September 16 to 18 at the Pilgrim Hills Camp and Conference Center near Brinkhaven, Ohio. The cost is \$135.

Lantern Fellowship is an adult retreat offered to the women of the UCC Ohio Conference. It is a time when women, ranging in age from 25 to 80 plus years, come together to enjoy good food, warm and friendly hospitality and the peaceful, quiet beauty of wooded hills and trails can renew the spirit. For more information, go to www.ocucc.org

Missions Offering Schedule

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



- August 7 - Back Bay Mission
- August 14 - CRIS
- August 21 - Kairos Prison Ministry
- August 28 - Good Samaritan

UCC's 'Mission: 1' Seeks to Address Hunger Worldwide

United Church News

For 11 days in early November, the United Church of Christ will make good on its "that they may all be one" motto with a coordinated mission campaign to gather more than 1 million food and household items for local food banks and marshal its 5,300 congregations to advocate collectively — and loudly — for hunger-related causes, both domestically and around the world.

"Mission: 1" as the campaign is called plays on the prevalence of the number "1" in the Nov. 1-11, 2011, timeframe and calls for three overarching goals:

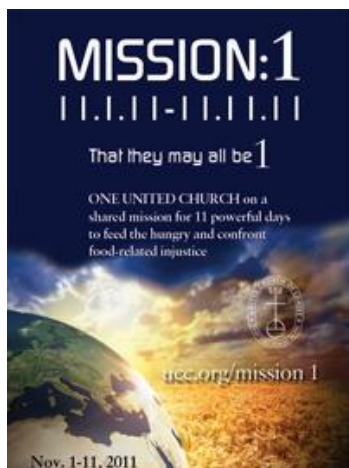
* In the 11 days, the United Church of Christ will collect more than 1 million items of healthy food and other household items for local food banks and outreach services.

*In the 11 days, the United Church of Christ will make an extra-special push to gather online contributions of more than \$111,111 for Neighbors in Need, offerings that will be shared for hunger-action purposes with agencies of justice and compassion throughout the United States.

*In the 11 days, the United Church of Christ will offer more than 11,111 letters to Congress asking the government to reform U.S. foreign assistance in a way that more effectively benefits hungry and poor people worldwide.

At the recent UICC General Synod in Tampa, congregations were urged to participate in Mission: 1.

Also during the 11 days, the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries will organize church member delegations to meet with members of Congress to bring attention to our church's concern about hunger issues at home and abroad, said the Rev. M. Linda Jaramillo, JWM's



"Our hope is that Mission: 1 will prove to be a game-changer in how we think of ourselves as one church in shared mission," said the Rev. Geoffrey A. Black, general minister and president. "This is a recognition that every local church is a center of mission and collectively we have power to make a huge impact."

The Rev. J. Bennett Guess, the UCC's communication director, said the Mission: 1 concept is a step in addressing five critical needs prevalent across the denomination's life:

1. The need to respect and encourage local mission as the mission of the whole church and to shift our denominational attitudes in support of that reality;
2. The need to embrace our churches' ministries of compassion alongside our deep commitments to justice advocacy and global partnership;
3. The need for newer, more meaningful metrics of success to measure our impact in the world, benchmarks other than membership totals or dollars given to national ministries. "Our numbers focus really needs to be on our impact in the world, those we serve";
4. The need for transparency and accountability. "Did we actually achieve what we said we were going to achieve?" and
5. The need to "wildly celebrate" something we accomplished together.

Black said he hopes churches, seminaries, colleges and human service agencies will unleash their own creativity around using the number "1" to stimulate excitement and involvement in Mission: 1.

"Can you find 11 people in your church who will pledge to give \$11 or \$111 online to Neighbors in Need on Nov. 1?" he said. "And will your church set a goal of gathering no fewer than 1,111 food items or 111 letters to Congress? There's a lot of playfulness we can inspire on our way to achieving these big goals, starting with local goals in every UCC setting."

You can learn more about Mission: 1 at ucc.org/mission1.

**Rejoice! The air conditioning has been fixed!
Come to worship this week and be cool!**

Of Stewardship and Mailboxes

By Jim Fewlass, Treasurer

When I was a child two of my favorite books were *Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice through the Looking_Glass*. These books were read to me in the high chair and at bed time. When I began reading, they were among my regular reading choices. By that time, I knew both almost by heart and became very annoyed at media moguls who thought that mixing the two stories in a film was permissible.



The complexity of finances at First Church this year is very much like these two books. Each is complex enough and become a thorough muddle when mixed together. Pledges to the operating budget and pledges to the capital campaign are much like Alice's adventures. Wool and water, wool and water – it's all the same for the White Queen – a pledge is a pledge is a pledge. In the looking glass, which is it? Remember those cards in Wonderland who painted the white roses red? We've been doing a lot of repainting of money misdirected from operating to capital and vice versa.

Second Quarter or half-year giving statements are issued in July. They will list what you have contributed to operating expenses, capital campaign and specific missions. Please review these statements carefully. If amounts have been recorded incorrectly, please contact Sharon Leidheiser, business administrator, to make any changes.

Expect delivery of statements into your church mailbox near the elevator on or before Sunday, July 17. Should you fail to pick up your statement, be assured there will be no Queen of Hearts shouting, "Off with your head!"

If a trip to your church mailbox is not possible in July or August, you may request delivery from the White Rabbit (postal service), who is always late for any important date. Please make your request through the church office. We no longer do general mailings because they cost about \$100 postage plus paper and printing per mailing.

Service for Harry Campbell is July 24

A memorial service for long-time First Church member Harry Campbell is be this Sunday, July 24, at 4 p.m. at Dublin Friendship Village, 6000 Riverside Dr. Harry died June 20.

First Church Gardeners Needed for Mission Opportunity

As part of Rev. Ahrens' 1 + 1 in 11 initiative, the Missions Committee has contacted Gladden Community House to seek volunteer opportunities for First Church members.

On Sunday, July 31, we are looking for 8-10 people who would be willing to travel to Gladden after the 9 a.m. worship service to do some weeding, sprucing up and planting of late season flowers to brighten the exterior of our long time mission partner.

We will car pool from the church at approximately 10 a.m. Cold drinks will be provided. We should be able to complete our task by noon. If you are interested, contact me at franpan2000@yahoo.com, or leave a message on the home phone 488-4136. THANKS! – **Fran Panek**

2nd Quarter Pledge Statements in Mailboxes

Pledge statements for donations from January 1 – June 30, 2011 are now available in your church mailbox. Please pick your statement up to help the church save money.

Also, please check your statement for any errors and contact Sharon Leidheiser to correct. Thank you for your generous donations to First Church.



Current Pledge Income

Pledges Budgeted -- \$529,872

June Actual -- \$39,086.55

YTD Actual -- \$269,693.47

YTD Budget -- \$264,936

Needed each month -- \$41,268.90

June Mission Offerings (Sundays)

Good Samaritan -- \$1,075.45

The Downtowners -- \$286.07

Catalyst -- \$942 (two Sundays)

Other June Mission Giving

B.R.E.A.D. -- \$1,875

Faith Mission -- \$62.27

Habitat for Humanity -- \$653 (Arts Festival)

Total Mission -- \$4,893.79



North Congregational Church To Celebrate Mary Magdalene

North Congregational Church, UCC, 2040 W. Henderson Rd., will hold its fifth annual "Mary Magdalene Celebration" on Saturday, July 30, from 5 to 8 p.m.

The celebration begins in the sanctuary with worship and music by the Mary Magdalene singers. Advent's Dance and Sign Ministry will dance to *Miriam's Song* and *Motherless*. After the service, there will be a Middle Eastern feast in the fellowship hall.

The suggested donation is \$10. Childcare is available free with an advanced reservation. To reserve a spot for the evening, call the church at 451-1835, or email Susan Kinzer at skinzer@midohio.twcbc.com by July 22.

Recent Gifts to First Church

By Bill Johannes and Jane Werum



Given to the Remembrance Fund in celebration of the life of Julia Hadley by:

Donald Dunn

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 in the church office.

Newsletter Publication Date Changing

Beginning in September, the *First Church News* will publish on the 1st of the month, rather than the third Wednesday. The August edition will be published August 17, with the next edition coming out on Thursday, September 1. With the new publication date, the deadline for submission of articles will be 10 days prior to publication. The deadline for the August edition is August 8; for the September issue, the deadline is August 23.

Member Happy August Birthdays

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1: Janet Stoneking | 19: Kim Storey |
| 2: Helen Spears | 19: Karen Sterrett |
| 2: Wib Smith | 19: Nicholas Hoffman |
| 3: Lourdes Henderson | 19: Emma Henderson |
| 3: Melody Leidheiser | 20: Mark Jensen |
| 4: Bill Rhoads | 20: Amy Trace |
| 4: Dayna McCrary | 21: Keene Lebold |
| 5: Deb Anderson | 21: Janice White |
| 5: Ellen Boriin | 21: Chris Glaros |
| 5: Heather Grunkemeyer | 22: Roland Weller |
| 6: Keith Gochnour | 22: Duan Cannon |
| 6: Jenny Sieck | 23: Polly DeVennish |
| 6: Denise Vogt | 23: Lissa Wade |
| 8: Dave Loy | 23: Matt Goetz |
| 9: Dan Harkins | 24: Charles Drummond |
| 10: Berry Cameron | 24: Tom Stewart |
| 10: Alan Daulton | 25: Barb Cunningham |
| 10: Bill Faith | 25: Dan Axt |
| 10: Kevin Ayres | 25: Andreas Klein |
| 10: Alex Aeschbury | 25: Steve Kennedy |
| 12: Lesley Schaab | 26: Larry Browne |
| 12: Ardis Holt | 26: Sandy Valinis |
| 12: Mary Weaver | 27: Sue Cook |
| 12: Rob Loevy | 27: Sondra Kesler |
| 13: Bobby Carrington | 27: Dennis Penfield |
| 13: Valerie Conlin-Losinski | 28: Russ Kelm |
| 14: Hugh Allen | 28: Jim Velo |
| 15: Chuck Atkinson | 28: Holly Heer |
| 15: Sancy Crooms | 28: Anna Rhoads |
| 16: Will Fernald | 29: Rebecca Baird |
| 16: Nancy Hadley | 30: Grace Johnson |
| 17: Brian Yontz | 30: Andrew Batchelor |
| 18: Dennis Secor | 30: Brian Holt |

Member Happy August Anniversaries

| |
|-----------------------------------|
| 6: Jenny and Andrew Middendorf |
| 6: Betty and James Powell |
| 7: Duan and Reggie Cannon |
| 7: Catherine and Steve Kennedy |
| 8: Holly and Bill Heer |
| 9: Jenelle and Dan Snyder |
| 10: Roberta and Robert Lucas |
| 11: Amy and Dave Nosse |
| 11: Jane and Dane Chavers |
| 15: Molly and Scott Sass |
| 16: Lisa Morris and Kent Shimeall |
| 17: Diane and Larry Dixon |
| 17: Lee Ann and Tom Hadley |
| 20: Karen and Steve Sterrett |
| 21: Dana and Hugh Schultz |
| 23: Betty Johnson and Cindy Conn |
| 24: Alice and Bill Boden |
| 24: Joyce and Dan Ward |
| 25: Chris and Tom Farquhar |
| 27: Melanie and Mark Brown |
| 28: Shirley and Donald Calhoun |
| 31: Tammy and Dave Wharton |

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

Calendar

Sunday, July 24

8 am – Blood Drive – Ed Ewing, Room D
9 am – Worship – PH
10 am – Stewardship – LC
11 am – Worship – San
12 pm – Fellowship Hour – PH
12:30 pm - Choir Rehearsal – San

Monday, July 25

6:30 pm – Stephen Ministers – Adult Library

Tuesday, July 26

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

Thursday, July 28

Staff Retreat
7:30 p.m. – Choir – Choir Room

Saturday, July 30

10 am – Parents of Preschoolers – West Lawn
10 am – Choir Rehearsal - San

Sunday, July 31

9 am – Worship – PH
11 am – Worship – San
12 pm – Fellowship Hour – PH
12:30 pm – Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room

Tuesday, August 2

5:30 pm – Sacred Earth – LC
7 pm – Deacons – LC
7 pm – Education Committees – Ed Wing
7 pm - Mission Committee – PFR

Wednesday, August 3

11 am – Book Study – Parlor
6 pm – Summer Book Study – Parlor

Thursday, August 4

7:30 pm – Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room

Saturday, August 6

10 am – Choir Rehearsal – San

Sunday, August 7

9 am – Worship – Sanctuary
11 am – Worship – San
12 pm – Fellowship Hour – PH
12:30 pm – Choir Rehearsal – San

Monday, August 8

7 pm – Trustees – LC

Tuesday, August 9

5:30 pm – Sacred Earth – LC
7 pm – Deacons – LC
7 pm – Mission Committee – PFR
7 pm – Personnel – Adult Library

Thursday, August 11

2 pm – Art Committee – Parlor

Saturday, August 13

10 am – First Church Quilters – LC

Sunday, August 14

9 am – Worship – PH
11 am – Worship – San
12 pm – Fellowship Hour – PH

Monday, August 15

6:30 pm – Technology Committee – LC

Tuesday, August 16

7 pm – Church Council – LC

Wednesday, August 17

11 am – Book Study – Parlor

Thursday, August 18

4:30 pm – Parents of Preschoolers

Saturday, August 20

9 am – House and Grounds – PFR

Congrats to Our Graduates!



Matthew A. Goetz graduated Harvard University in May 2011 with the degree Master of Education. He was also selected as the commencement marshal to represent his class at the graduation exercises. Matthew will attend Eden Theological Seminary beginning August 2011 as a founding member of the institution's Military Chaplaincy Concentration within the M.Div degree program.

Laura Hadley graduated from Columbus School for Girls.

Madeline Aeschbury graduated from Westerville North High School, and **Greer Aeschbury** graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University.

Summer Petras graduated from Village Academy in Powell, and will attend Otterbein University.

Chelsea Hartz graduated from Ohio State University.

Mark Losinski graduated from Gahanna Lincoln High School.

August Fellowship Hour

August 7: Ephesians
 August 14: Galatians
 August 21: Haggai
 August 28: Hosea

August Acolyte Schedule

August 7: Jansen Allred and Anna Rambo
 August 14: Will Zimmerman and Luke Zimmerman
 August 21: Ben Allred and Dylan Hopcraft
 August 28: Cameron Wade and Jansen Allred
 (Schedules online at www.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.

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.

Deaths

Harry Campbell – June 20

Baptisms

Mark Daniel Ellison Jr. – June 26
 Harper Raye Weaver – June 26

Weddings

Linda Bozik and Raul Zendejas – June 18
 Mallory Meeks and Matt DeLucas – June 18
 Jennifer Stadtlander and Dustin Klare – July 1

Fellowship Hour Beverage Sales



Coffee and tea sales will be available on August 7 and 21 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. 14,
mworth@first-church.org

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
 Denny Mahoney.....Office Manager
 Thomas Luff.....Building 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, July 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