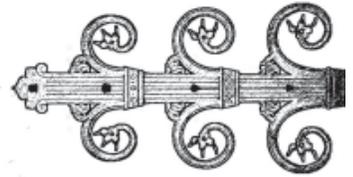




First Church News



First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ • Columbus, Ohio

Volume 156, Number 11
September 22, 2008

For Everything There Is A Season

by Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister



Election season is upon us. Once again, Ohio is at the heart of this presidential campaign season. McCain/Palin and Obama/Biden are crisscrossing Ohio attempting to break the national deadlock around issues facing our society.

As the papers have shown in the last few days, pastors and rabbis are weighing in on the election, too. A group calling itself The Alliance Defense Fund is calling on conservative pastors to preach for specific candidates and against the separation of church and state. A group led by a number of respected United Church of Christ pastors is calling upon preachers to preach about the sanctity of the church and state separation. I am not a part of this group. I have my reasons, but I will not sign an IRS complaint against the alliance or others.

“We need to face poverty and deal with its devastation.”

Hurricane season is upon us as well. With 37 million Americans living below the poverty level, the hurricane named poverty is devastating our nation. We need to face poverty and deal with its devastation. How are we, as Christians, crying out for the end of war, reforming an unjust health-care system, creating new well-paying jobs, working for stewardship of the earth and less dependence on oil, dealing with rising homeless rates in the midst of rising home foreclosure and facing the underfunding of education for nation’s children? In the face of poverty’s hurricane force, most politicians are lost in personality talk that borders on ludicrous. As people of faith, we need to find common ground and a way forward out of the malaise of these times. In such a vein, *We Believe Ohio* is calling the members of our congregations to register voters, help the poor vote before November 4 and work at the polls on Election Day. We are asking the members of our congregation to call television stations and demand that sleazy commercials be pulled from our screens. Insist that the issues of our times be the focus of media coverage.

On September 25, I will be speaking with bishops, pastors, priests and rabbis about ballot Issue #5. We come from a wide range of theological perspectives and together we are calling for people to **Vote Yes On 5!** Issue #5 was put on the ballot by the payday lenders. They want us to continue to allow interest rates of up to 391% on loans they make to the poor. Along with the BREAD organization and a vast coalition of other religious and civic leaders, we believe the law passed in May, which calls for a rate of no more than 28% on loans, is fair and just. As you weigh in, I hope each one of you participates in the electoral process. From our youngest members to our oldest, we must turn out and vote. This truly is an election that will shape our nation’s future. Please take part.

Renovation and Rededication of Children’s Library

by Mark S. Williams, Director of Christian Education

On Sunday, September 7, the congregation of First Church celebrated the renovation and rededication of the Alma Keeler Children’s Library in memory of Dorinda K. White. Dorinda faithfully served as the Commissioned Minister of Christian Education.

The Christian education department wishes to thank the Renovation Committee for all their hard work and talents given to this project. Those serving on the committee are; Mary Weaver, Chair; Celeste Feather, Debbie Yontz, Melody Leidheiser, Ellen Boriin, Shelly Gies, Elaine Warren, Gayle Henderson, Leslie Fulford, Bill Rhoads, Stephanie Weaver and Emma Henderson. This committee continues to bring their gifts after the rededication with a book drive and the continuous hard work of reshelving by Elaine Warren. New floor cushions will be arriving in the next few weeks as well. Please show your gratitude to this wonderful committee.

In This Issue	
Front Page.....	1
From The Pastors.....	2-3
Church News.....	4 - 5
Christian Ed.....	6
Young Adult.....	7
Youth.....	7
Missions.....	8
Announcements.....	9
Birthdays.....	9
Calendar.....	10
Prayers.....	11
Staff & Council.....	11
Back Cover.....	12

Blinded by the Light

by Reverend Barbara R. Cunningham,
Minister for Pastoral Care



Not long ago, I read an article in *Oprah* magazine that went along with our theme of "God Lights Our Way." Written by Martha Beck, it had some good advice for all of us. In the following text, I will try to give you the essence of what she said.

It seems that along with Reinhold Niebuhr, she believes that "laughter is the beginning of prayer." For those of you who have been here when I make a mistake in worship (I don't even try to be funny), I hear laughter, and all of you know I am human. I do believe that God must have a sense of humor!

Beck encourages us to "fly high on faith." There are some who get caught up for a while in the charismatic preaching of certain religious beliefs. She had a friend who became involved in a movement such as this, and after a year, he began to hear from the preacher's insistence that "he alone knew the mind of God." Then he learned that the preacher he admired and loved was sleeping with someone other than his wife. He left that "charismatic movement" and found a more balanced faith.

How do we know when we have embraced a connection to God through faith?

Ö First of all, we can embrace our own frailties and uncertainties. Absolute knowledge of everything is not possible for humankind. We can be like Descartes, who ultimately decided that the only thing he was sure of was that he wasn't sure. Embracing this lack of knowing all frees us to make our best subjective judgment about a claim of truth.

Ö Secondly, Beck suggests that we are to "test every idea with all of our senses. If you get a queasy feeling from any of your senses, back away."

Ö Third, she states, "Notice whether an idea unifies or divides." Wow, if we could be sure of that, we'd have it made.

Real love of the others makes us want to unify. It makes us whole. Love heals and our faith is a light upon our path. Our faith is a loving unity. That doesn't mean we don't disagree. It means we seek to be a light to all with love. We don't badger others to accept our beliefs, but we love them as they are. We cannot be blinded by our own light so much that we do not see the other person and listen carefully to his or her needs.

May our light be brighter because of our faith!

The Power of Education

by Reverend Laura A. Tisher,
Minister of Youth & Young Adults



Fall is arriving! Memories from summer high school or college class reunions are now just distant thoughts. Students and teachers have been in school for several weeks already. College students are beginning to become more comfortable in their new settings. Many of us are finally getting used to new schedules and settling into new routines.

As we go about our daily lives, getting accustomed to our usual habits can be so brain-numbing that we end up just going through the motions and actually forget the privilege that we live with each day. The education we are receiving, or have received, is a blessing not everyone around the world is lucky enough to receive. Did you know -

- 93,000,000 school-age children around the world did not go to school in 2006.
- 1 in 3 children globally will never set foot in a school.
- 1 in 5 adults in the world can't read.
- Only 1 in 3 students in some countries around the world, like Chad, will not reach the fifth grade.
- 67:1 is the student-teacher ratio in Mozambique primary schools; Cambodia 50:1; El Salvador 40:1; U.S. 14:1; Sweden 10:1.

"Education is one of the most important tools for eradicating poverty. Primary education and basic literacy lead to longer lives, lower birth rates and higher incomes." *

When we hear these statistics, it can be so easy for us to say, "Why should I care? It's not my problem. I've got too many other things to worry about. Leave 'well enough alone.' With terrorists running amok and an economy that could collapse any moment, don't rock the boat. You have no idea what could come from meddling. We could never take on anything as massive as global education. How could we do anything that would help? What do I really know about all of this, anyhow?" "

Jesus said, "I tell you, if these [disciples] were silent, the stones would shout out." (Luke 35:40). The world today is begging for more to be done to improve global education! Don't let fear, apathy, cynicism or paralysis stop you from speaking out, getting involved, and bringing change and transformation locally and throughout our world. Do something today! Take a first step: visit: www.globalministries.org and enter the search word education.

* *World Ark, Heifer International. September/October 2008*

Pilgrimage to Iona Scotland

by Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister



I have received confirmation from the Iona Community in Scotland that we have 15 places saved for First Congregational Church to spend the week of July 4 - 11 on the island of Iona in 2009. The confirmation is very exciting news, and Susan and I are looking forward to leading the group.

Iona is a small island off the northwest coast of Scotland. More than 1,400 years ago, St. Columba brought

Christianity to Iona from Ireland. Since that time, Iona has been a spiritual home to people of faith from every imaginable land. Susan, Luke, Daniel, Sarah and I were on the island for a week in 2004, and we found it to be the most spiritual place we had ever been. Each of us is drawn to return.

For more information check out the Web site, www.iona.org.uk, or you can Google "Iona Community Scotland."

If you would like to join us, we would love for you to come. With 15 places and eight people having shown interest, we need to make some decisions soon. The cost for the trip is around \$3,000 and we have a great chance to fill all our spots. I will have more details in the coming days.

The trip will begin with a flight to Glasgow, Scotland. We will immediately explore the Reformation roots of our faith in Scotland on day one. On day two, we will go by train, ferry and bus to Iona, which is "off the beaten track." In the course of this trip, we will stay overnight in Oban, a quaint seaside town.

The Iona Community is amazingly ecumenical and draws from Christians worldwide. It is centered in art, music and social justice! The week on Iona will be filled with Celtic worship and music. There are times to create art and be silent. There is a time to dance and pray, time to whale watch (if you like) and time to travel to another island to meet puffins (they are adorable little birds). Worship is held twice daily in the 800-year-old Benedictine abbey, where we also will live. We will return after this week refreshed and ready to face the days ahead!

**Pilgrimage
Iona, Scotland
July 2-13, 2009**

**Reservation
Deadline
Oct. 10, 2008**



Wednesday Morning Book Study

Rev. Tim Ahrens' Wednesday Morning Book Study looks at author Joan Didion's, *The Year of Magical Thinking*.

The book study meets the first and third Wednesday of each month from 11 a.m. to noon in the church parlor. Books will be available in the church office prior to the first session at a cost of \$13. Didion's book recounts a year in her life in which her husband died suddenly and she cared for her seriously ill daughter. Her daughter died shortly after the book was completed. Didion was honored with a National Book Award and was named a 2005 Pulitzer Prize finalist for her work. For additional information, contact Denny Mahoney at 614.228.1741, ext. 17, or dmahoney@first-church.org.

Come and Be Counted

by Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens,
Senior Minister



Our Monday Night Lights series continues October 6 at 7 p.m., with a film called *Uncounted*. This summer, I viewed this film in Chautauqua, New York. It is a film that I believe all people should view before the November 4 election. On October 6, I will watch the film with you and lead a discussion.

Below is what the filmmakers say about *Uncounted*:

"*Uncounted* is an explosive new documentary that shows how the election fraud that changed the outcome of the 2004 election led to even greater fraud in 2006 - and now looms as an unbridled threat to the outcome of the 2008 election. This controversial feature length film by Emmy award-winning director David Earnhardt examines in factual, logical and yet startling terms how easy it is to change election outcomes and undermine election integrity across the United States. Noted computer programmers, statisticians, journalists and experienced election officials provide the irrefutable proof."

Uncounted is a wakeup call to all Americans. Beyond increasing the public's awareness, the film inspires greater citizen involvement in fixing a broken electoral system. As we approach the decisive election of 2008, *Uncounted* will change how you feel about the way votes are counted in America.

I hope to see you October 6, at 7 p.m. Come and be counted!

Music Notes

by Marti Rideout, Interim Minister of Music



First Congregational Church Concerts

Mark your calendars for upcoming Congregational Concerts at First Church. For a schedule of the entire 2008 - 2009 season, visit www.first-church.org and click on concerts.

September 21, 4 p.m.MAINSTREET BRASS

Mainstreet Brass was formed in 1986. Its formation was inspired by a passion for brass quintet literature and performance and a goal to present interesting and entertaining music to its audiences. The quintet has performed for enthusiastic audiences at arts festivals, colleges and concert series in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, New England, the Midwest and the United Kingdom.



Described by concert presenters as “marvelously delightful” and “magical” Mainstreet Brass presents varied repertoire spanning the centuries from florid 17th century canzons and Bach transcriptions, to memorable show tunes and blues classics from Jelly Roll Morton, W.C. Handy and Fats Waller.

Mainstreet Brass is always full of surprises. It’s part of what this unique ensemble is about – flexibility, artistic range, accessibility and reaching out to listeners of all ages. Education is also a big part of the Mainstreet Brass mission. Most of the members are full-time music educators who bring years of experience when the ensemble presents music programs at schools. Children learn about how brass instruments were made long ago and hear examples of how they are used today. The Mainstreet Brass spirit creates a contagious on-stage energy from the opening downbeat to the final chord. Plan to attend this Mainstreet Brass concert and you will enjoy a moment of music making that will be uplifting and magical.



October 19, 4 p.m.THOMAS TROTTER, ORGANIST

Thomas Trotter is one of Britain’s widely-admired musicians. The excellence of his musicianship is known internationally, having performed in Berlin, Leipzig, Vienna, Salzburg, Edinburgh, Rouen, Haarlem and the United States. He has given the opening recital on new or restored organs in places such as Cleveland’s Severance Hall, Princeton University Chapel, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, St. David’s Hall in Cardiff and the Royal Albert Hall in London. Trotter has appeared as an organ soloist with the Vienna Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, London Philharmonic and Royal Philharmonic orchestras and the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. Trotter is the organist at St. Margaret’s Church, Westminster Abbey and visiting professor of organ at the Royal College of Music.

This concert is one of three given on the same weekend, in partnership with the Columbus Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, commemorating the International Year of the Organ. Distinguished French organist Olivier Latry will perform at St. Joseph Cathedral on Friday, October 17, at 7:30 p.m. Jane Parker-Smith, virtuoso organist from England, will perform at Broad Street Presbyterian Church on Saturday, October 18, at 7:30 p.m.

Special Thanks: Our thanks go to those musicians who ended a summer of diverse and memorable music to complement the global emphasis selected for each Sunday: Todd Cunningham and his quintet of trombone players and soloist Victor John for offering exceptional music for Appalachian Sunday; Kelley Gilbert and her quartet of saxophone players and Greg Halbe and his quartet of singers for presenting such wondrously appropriate and beautiful music for Russian Sunday.

Handbell Ringers Needed: If you can read music, lift two handbells at the same time, count to four multiple times, and would enjoy the fellowship, challenge and joy of ringing handbells, contact Marti Rideout. Three or four more ringers are needed to complete the Gallery Handbell Ringers.

Treble Choir: The Treble Choir had its first rehearsal September 14. This choir is open to children and young people in grades one through eight and provides an opportunity to receive musical training, participate more fully in the worship life of this congregation and learn the songs of our faith. Rehearsal is Sunday, 9 - 9:45 a.m. Contact Marti Rideout for more information.

Compline: This 30-minute service is offered on the third Sunday of each month at 9 p.m. It includes plainsong chant and a quiet organ improvisation.

➤ **October 19, 9 p.m.** ~ Sung by the women of the First Church choir.

The Office of Compline is the last of eight daily sung services prescribed for monastic orders since the founding of the Benedictines. The service is full of imagery equating night with death and Jesus with light. The hymn for Compline, *Te lucis ante terminum* (“Before the light at end of day”) and the canticle *Nunc Dimittis* (the Song of Simeon) are standard features in a Compline service. If you have not experienced this beautiful and peaceful candlelight service, plan to attend and invite some friends.



First Church News

News from the Adult Education Department

by Mark S. Williams, Director of Christian Education



Sacred Conversation at First Church

The Christian Education Department of First Congregational Church began a journey of "Sacred Conversations" in September that will continue throughout the 2008-09 education year and beyond. These sacred conversations will be opportunities for sustained and in-depth dialogue. They will serve as a common thread woven throughout the adult education programming for this year and many years to come.

The following are qualities of a sacred conversation that have been adapted from the United Church of Christ:

- *Invoking God's presence and wisdom when we gather.*
- *Establishing a safe space with a commitment to mutual respect and Christian love.*
- *Listening deeply to and honoring the feelings of anger, pain and joy.*
- *Listening deeply to and honoring the feelings of shame, fear and grief.*
- *Continuing the conversation beyond an exploration of individual feelings to the realities of cultural and institutional structures.*
- *Recognizing that our deepest common humanity is not grounded in race, religious creed or national origin, but in the inclusive love of God.*
- *Realizing that within our common God-given humanity resides an array of colors, cultures, sexualities and beliefs.*
- *Ending each conversation with at least one tangible and specific commitment to action on behalf of justice in our communities.*
- *Understanding that this conversation is not a one-time event, but a continuing journey.*

This common thread of "sacred conversations" throughout the programming will focus on vital topics in need of deep discussion and exploration such as: race, open & affirming, environment, the divide between the rich and poor, immigration and religious tolerance. A variety of opportunities in a safe and welcoming environment will be created so that everyone's voice is heard and respected. We invite you to participate in these unique and enlightening "sacred conversations." Together we can travel forward on this continuing journey to healing, reconciliation and justice.

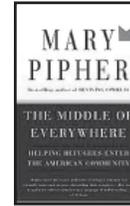
For information regarding specific offerings, refer to the *Christian Education Offerings* brochure available in the church office and on the Web site, or contact Mark S. Williams, Director of Christian Education, at 614.228.1741, ext. 15.

Tutoring Makes A Difference

by Dawn George

Volunteering to improve students' reading and writing skills has a profound impact on countless youngsters in Columbus schools. Several members of First Church tutor at Siebert Elementary School for two hours each week. To join the team at Siebert, call Valerie Stichter at 614.885.0730. In 17 other Columbus schools, tutors are needed to assist kindergarten students with reading and writing. My experience last year at Fairwood Elementary was a joy. Please consider volunteering and make a difference in the life of a child. Call Virgie Homeny at Columbus Reads at 614.365.5253.

Tuesdays at First Fall Book Study & Concerts



October 21, 11 a.m.
October 28, 11 a.m.
November 4, 11 a.m.
November 11, 11 a.m.

During upcoming Tuesdays at First, join us for a stimulating study of bestselling author Mary Pipher's book, *The Middle of Everywhere: Helping Refugees Enter the American Community*, as she sheds light on the newest members of the American family - refugees. In cities all over the country, refugees arrive daily. They come with nothing but the desire to experience the American dream. Their endurance in the face of tragedy and their ability to hold on to the virtues of family, love and joy are a lesson for Americans. Their stories will make you laugh and cry, and give you a deeper understanding of the wider world in which we live. Become enlightened as you discover the perspectives of all our global village.

Following each discussion session, members are invited to attend a concert in the sanctuary at 12:15 p.m. and a lunch served in the parish hall at 12:45 p.m. The book is \$13 and can be purchased in the church office.

Tuesdays at First Concert Series

Tuesdays at First is a tradition. Join us for this delightful break of beautiful music and talented artists.

Oct. 21.....Marti Rideout
Oct. 28.....George Weckman
Nov. 4.....Stephen Jacoby
Nov. 11.....Ben Wiant
March 3.....G. Dene Barnard
March 10.....Scott Hayes
March 17.....James Yeager
March 24.....Paul Thornock

Book Study ~ 11 a.m.

Free Concert ~ 12:15 - 12:45 p.m.

Lunch ~ 12:45 p.m., \$7 donation accepted

Evensong

Anthems and canticles sung by
the First Church Choir.

Nov. 2, 2008 & May 3, 2009, 4 p.m.

Concerts & Evensong are presented in
the First Church sanctuary.

Notes From Christian Education

by Mark S. Williams, Director of Christian Education

Monday Night Lights: Mark your calendars for first Monday of each month (except December) for a great night of programming at First Church. There will be many opportunities for all ages. The program begins at 7 p.m. with a short worship service and then breaks into different interest and program offerings ending at 8:30 p.m.

Offerings include a movie series, discussion groups and presentations. A mini-vacation Bible school will be available for the children and childcare will be provided for infants and toddlers.

Monday Night Lights

A monthly gathering for enlightenment & fellowship.

Dates

October 6

November 3

January 5

February 2

March 2

April 6

Movie

Uncounted

Hotel Rawanda

Little Miss Sunshine

V For Vendetta

An Inconvenient Truth

Brokeback Mountain

Program starts at 7 p.m. at First Church

♦ **Women's Retreat Set:** Annual Women's Retreat at Templd Hills camp is scheduled for Nov. 7 - 9. This time away from family and work renews and refreshes just before the craziness of the holiday season begins.

♦ **Family Spring Retreat:** The Spring Retreat will begin Friday evening, April 24 through Sunday morning, April 26, 2009. Bring your whole family or just yourself. The weekend will include hiking, nature talks and activities, devotions, basketball, fishing, folk dancing for all ages, a campfire with s'mores, crafts, singing and Sunday morning worship. All First Church youth are able to attend at no cost thanks to an Alma Keeler Grant requested by the Parish Life Committee.

♦ **New Member Class:** The next new members class will be held Mon., Oct. 13 & 20, in the First Church choir room on the second floor. The class will join First Church as members on Sun., Oct. 26. Those interested in joining the class, should register in the church office or call Mark S. Williams at 614.228.1741, ext. 15. This class is also offered to anyone interested in learning more about First Church and the United Church of Christ.

Children's Book Drive

Alma Keeler Children's Library Book Drive Help our G.L.O.W. worm G-R-O-W!



The Alma Keeler Children's Library has been renovated, and it looks beautiful! As part of the renovation, the books within the library were evaluated and many of them had to be thrown away due to wear and tear. We would like to replace the old books with new books through a Book Drive. Our goal is to collect 100 new books!

Donating a book is easy! Just stop by the children's education bulletin board and register to donate a new book to our library. There is a suggestion/sign-up listed on the board with reminder tags or feel free to pick your favorite. New hardback books are best (they stand up better to wear), but we will accept paperbacks as well. Very gently used books may be considered as well.

Please place your donation in the box marked with "Alma Keeler Children's Library Book Drive" under the library desk. As books are donated, we will add another part to our G.L.O.W. worm on the bulletin board and watch it grow. Questions? Contact Ellen Boriin at 614.436.0471.

Fourth Grade and New Youth Bible Presentation

Every year our church presents a *New Revised Standard Version Gift Bible* to children in the fourth grade, or those who are older but have joined in the past year. It is our way of encouraging our children in their faith journey. This year, the presentation will be Sun., Sept. 21, during the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. worship services.

A Big Thanks For A Great Time!

A big thank you is extended to all who attended the First Church Annual Picnic on Aug. 24. Thanks also for all who helped make this wonderful day possible. We had great fun, great music (thanks to Soul to Soul Band), great food and fellowship. Thank you also to all who filled out surveys at the picnic. You will find the results of the survey on the following page.



Youth & Young Adult Ministry

YAYA Ministry

by Rev. Laura A. Tisher, Minister of Youth & Young Adults



Young Adult Announcements...

Young Adult Ministry: Young adults at First Church are invited to join the fun and fellowship of others at upcoming events.

♦ **Dinner Group:** Join other First Church young adults for dinner and fellowship. Sat., Oct. 4, 6:30 p.m., at Mad Mex, 1542 North High Street.

♦ **Parents for Others:** Parents for Others meets in the toddler room of the education wing once a month from 3:45 - 4:45 p.m. All parents with young children are welcome.

➤ **October Mission Projects:** Shower in a Box Project & Birthright. Shower in a Box is a wonderful way to shower a military mom or mom-to-be whose spouse is deployed during her pregnancy. Birthright is an organization that helps women who are distressed about an unplanned pregnancy. Please bring donations such as new board books, swaddling blankets, toys, and Babies 'R' Us gift cards. Birthright: Please bring donations like gently used baby blankets, clothing, etc. - up to 12 months. Donations from the entire church are welcome!

♦ **CROP Hunger Walk, Sun., Oct. 12:** CROP hunger walks help children and families in the U.S. and worldwide have food for today, while building for a better tomorrow. Each year, some 2 million CROP walkers, volunteers and sponsors put their caring into action by raising more than \$16 million per year to help end hunger and poverty. Join the First Church CROP Walk Team (you do not have to be a young adult to join us!). Check out the First Church Young Adults CROP Walk Team web page at:

http://www.cropwalkonline.org/site/TR/CropWalksGeneral?team_id=3331&pg=team&fr_id=1618&et=ECqBd-wjb1yVwz_S89Lw5g..&s_tafld=3324.

Information: Rev. Lori at 614.228.1741, ext 21

ltisher@first-church.org or Carrie.Keller.smith.5620@osu.edu.

Fun Facts from the Church Picnic Survey

Thanks to all who filled out surveys at the church picnic. Based on the results, we have tallied the below fun facts.

- Oldest church member: Arlene Reynolds, born in 1927
- Youngest church member: Michelle Gloege, born 1981
- Newest church member: Jerome Dailey, joined May 2007
- Longest church member: Martha Huey, joined in 1971
- Most involved member: Greg Halbe

Greg is or has served as an usher, Sr. Minister member relations group member, deacon senior deacon, nominating committee member, church growth committee member, church council member.

Your prizes can be picked up in Rev. Lori's office. Contact her at 614.228.1741, ext 21, or ltisher@first-church.org.

Youth Announcements...

Youth Ministry: First Church youth are invited to participate in our many opportunities to learn and grow as disciples of Christ. Beyond Sunday morning classes, the youth ministry also includes many youth group activities and events, with special opportunities for friendship and learning through retreats, outings, missions and participation in conferences.

September 21.....12:30 - 2:30 p.m.

Confirmation Field Trip: Hindu Temple

We will eat lunch together and visit a Hindu temple. Confirmands and mentors from last year (2007-2008) are invited to join us on this field trip

September 27.....Sat. 2:30 - 6:30 p.m.

High School Experience God in Nature Hike

High school students will hike the trails at Highbanks Metro Park, experiencing God in nature. Meet at the church to carpool (2:30 p.m.) or meet at park entrance at 3 p.m.

September 27-28.....6:30 p.m. - 9 a.m.

High School Lock-in @ Church

A night of games and fellowship.

September 28.....12:30 - 5 p.m.

Middle School Zip Line

Middle school participants will enjoy an exhilarating 3-hour adventure to zip through the treetops on a network of cables. For fee, registration and other details, contact Rev. Lori. *Closed toed shoes are required and participants must weigh over 70 lbs and under 250 lbs. Permission forms and money must be turned into Rev. Lori by Sept. 16. Chaperones are still needed.*

October 4,8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Camp Work Day @ Templed Hills UCC Camp

Work Projects: There are usually a variety of projects that can be done, depending on the season, number of participants and skills. Campsite managers will work with you to make the best possible match of skills and tasks. Please bring work gloves and basic tools.

For Information & Registration

Contact Rev. Lori at 614.228.1741, ext 21

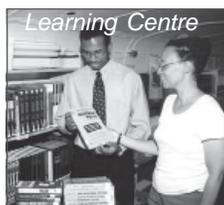
ltisher@first-church.org.

Missions

Annual Trip to Jamaica

by Heather Biggers

CATALYST is the mission relationship between First Congregational Church, the communities of downtown Kingston, Jamaica, and the Grace and Staff Foundation. Downtown Kingston is home to many wonderful families living in extremely poor and violent communities. These families, our brothers and sisters, have asked us to help them educate their children. CATALYST assists students who use Grace and Staff's homework center, the Learning Centre of Central Kingston (LICK).



I made my annual work trip to Kingston at the end of August, without the company of my stalwart colleague Duan Cannon. During the trip, I held one-on-one sessions with many students, as we reviewed the past year's accomplishments or challenges and set goals for the coming year. Accomplishments:

- We have 36 students who receive partial scholarships to cover secondary school fees. CATALYST also supports students who use the LICK Centre through mentoring, SAT and PSAT study classes, the "It's All About Me" essay competition and the photo club.
- CATALYST is really making a difference in the community. The SAT and PSAT classes have become known throughout Kingston.
- CATALYST has a student, Kemoy Smith, who will be attending college in Michigan to study engineering; two other students, Ramone Williams and Denise Francis, will be going to the University of Technology in Kingston.

These are good stories, but there are other, painful stories. Kemoy's brother was murdered this summer. Denise will travel a dangerous road between downtown and University of Technology where female college students become targets to the political thugs. We've done a great deal, but there is always more to do!

Concern At The Pantries

by Dawn George



First Church collects and contributes food to the Broad Street Presbyterian Church and Gladden Food Pantries, but both pantries are struggling to meet the ever-increasing needs for assistance.

Broad Street has reported a sharp increase in the number of people using the pantry this year. Gladden served 820 households in July 2007, but 977 this past July. Mandi Ciriaco, Gladden's vice president, said Gladden is regularly over budget in purchasing food for its shelves.

The Missions Commission is grateful for members' generosity, and particularly encourages donations of the following items: canned fruit, soups and stews, proteins (peanut butter, tuna, chicken, ham) and personal and household items such as toilet paper, family size soap, shampoo, laundry detergent and cleaning products.

Please consider donating to these valuable Columbus pantries. Items can be left in the baskets located near our church entrances.

Mission Offerings Schedule: In September and October, the undesignated loose offerings will benefit the following missions that First Church supports:

September 21: United Church Homes - a not-for-profit retirement services corporation offering housing, health care, and other services.

September 28: Gladden House - A nonprofit organization providing neighborhood social services. Named in honor of Rev. Washington Gladden.

October 19 & 26: Catalyst Providing educational opportunities for Jamaican youth.

Volunteers Needed: Back Bay Mission, another mission supported by First Church, continues to help rebuild areas of the Gulf Coast and Midwest ravaged by severe weather in 2008.

Back Bay, a disaster recovery program of the United Church of Christ, is looking for volunteers to help in Midwest communities hit hard by flooding and tornadoes this year. Volunteer openings are available through mid-November and for 2009. If interested, sign up at www.ucc.org/volunteers/disaster-recovery-volunteers/disaster-recovery-mission.html. Those interested in helping in the Biloxi, Mississippi, should contact Phyllis Rinehart at bbvol@datasync.com. To work in New Orleans, sign up at www.ucc.org/volunteer/hurricane. Contact Stephanie Cohan at www.recovery@uccfla.org to help in Florida.

Fellowship Hour Beverage Sales: Coffee and tea sales are available on Sun., October 5 & 19 (the first and third Sundays of the month) during fellowship hour. This is a UCC coffee project initiative and your participation is greatly appreciated.

If you miss the regular sale, call Nancy Burba on Wednesdays in the First Church office at 614.228.1741, ext. 28.

Submitted by Nancy Burba.





Calling All Pets: Pet Blessing

by Kelley Gilbert



On an average Saturday afternoon, I wandered through the aisles of the local Petsmart with my long-haired mutt, Chester.

As we rounded the corner to the toy aisle, I was surprised to see a middle-aged woman and her teen-age daughter beaming at my Chester.

"That is Chester, isn't it?" the older woman asked as she and her daughter stroked his head and belly. As we chatted, I found that the pair had met Chester several months earlier at an adoption event and were planning a visit to the shelter to adopt him.

A few months later, Chester ran into a few more friends from his past. This time it was Santa and his elves. We were in the lobby of the Pets Hotel waiting to make an appointment for Chester's favorite doggy day camp when an elf came running from the next room where pets were posing for pictures with Santa.

"Chester, I can't believe it's you!" the elf exclaimed, eyes tearing up. Chester's tail wagged happily as he and I entered the make-shift North Pole where it was explained that Kris Kringle and his elves had been Chester's foster family for a time.

I've discovered that Chester had brought blessings to a myriad of people through his happy-go-lucky approach to life and the unconditional love. It's in that spirit of love that First Church will hold its first pet blessing ceremony. Please join us on the First Church lawn on Saturday, October 18, at 11:45 a.m. for a special service honoring our furry, feathered and scaled family members. All pets and people are welcome!

Ordination Announcement: Deborah Lindsay, a person In Care with the Central Southeast Ohio Association, was approved for ordination by the Association Council. Deborah has been called to the pastoral staff of First Community Church in Columbus. Her ordination service will be Sun., Sept. 28, 4 p.m. at First Community's south campus.

Keep It Current: Please keep First Church updated on your latest contact information, so that we can better communicate with you. Call the office at 614.228.1741 or email home@first-church.org if your home address, phone numbers or email addresses have changed.

Room Reservations ~ Phone Ahead: If you need to reserve a room for a meeting, please contact Sharon Leidheiser as far in advance as possible at 614.228.1741, ext. 11, or shar@first-church.org. We need to know when you will be here in order to plan accordingly.

Member Happy October Birthdays

10/1:	Melinda Anderson	10/20:	Frank Hussey
10/1:	Chloe Metz	10/20:	Nancy Bouman
10/2:	Craig Oyler	10/21:	Reggie Cannon
10/2:	Debra Johnson	10/21:	Gary Leidheiser
10/2:	Peter Murray	10/21:	Elizabeth Hanawalt
10/2:	Lauren Glaros	10/21:	Jennifer Dean
10/2:	Jon Leidheiser-Stoddard	10/22:	Alan Miller
10/3:	Tim Carsey	10/22:	Carter Rodriguez
10/4:	Catharine Maupin	10/23:	Denny Mahoney
10/4:	Charlie Weaver	10/23:	Betsy Hubbard
10/5:	Ed Koetz	10/24:	Sharon Walquist
10/5:	Keith White	10/24:	Celeste Feather
10/6:	David Owen	10/24:	Jill Paulus
10/6:	Andrew Welsh-Huggins	10/25:	Murley Miller
10/6:	Tammy Wharton	10/25:	Kevin Carrico
10/8:	Marian Whitney	10/25:	Matt Zeiger
10/8:	Bert Cook	10/25:	Michael Warrick
10/8:	Deana Armstrong	10/26:	Gail Johannes
10/8:	Aaron Shaw	10/26:	Kathie Cole
10/9:	Dawn George	10/26:	Heather Biggers
10/9:	Pam Welsh-Huggins	10/26:	Barbara Mason
10/11:	Tony Lee	10/26:	Karl Metz
10/12:	Harry Campbell	10/27:	Frances Gurley
10/12:	Hugh Schultz	10/27:	Mary Ann Goetz
10/12:	Barb Poppe	10/27:	Shawn Finley
10/13:	Jeffrey Cooke	10/27:	Carl Miller
10/14:	Drew Wade	10/27:	Bryan West
10/14:	Andy Hudepohl	10/27:	Summer Petras
10/15:	Janet Lyons	10/28:	Melvin Koch
10/15:	Kathleen O'Neill	10/28:	Greg Halbe
10/16:	Jim Gieseke	10/28:	Stephanie Koscher
10/16:	David Wyatt	10/28:	Eddie Anderson
10/16:	Joyce Bishop	10/29:	Rebecca Hess
10/17:	Dene Barnard	10/29:	Queenie Lee
10/17:	Jackie Dean	10/30:	Geoff Dean
10/17:	Nicole Baas	10/30:	Melissa Simpson
10/18:	Carol Rodriguez	10/30:	Mark Knueve
10/18:	Gayle Henderson	10/31:	Martha Huey
10/19:	Michael Knerr	10/31:	Michael Bockbrader

Member Happy Anniversaries

10/1:	Lucille & Walter Kropp
10/5:	Barb Poppe & Bill Faith
10/7:	Valerie Conlin-Losinski & David Losinski
10/7:	Lauren & Chris Glaros
10/7:	Kathryn Bamberger & Steve Brandehoff
10/8:	Patty & John Amy
10/9:	Carrie & Dave Ghose
10/11:	Janet & Richard Kevan
10/13:	Amber & Joseph Lane
10/14:	Priscilla & David Mondiek
10/14:	Jenny & Joe Provenzano
10/16:	Gretchen & Edoualdo Fleurant
10/21:	Kathy & Tom Brownfield
10/23:	Elaine & James Borling
10/25:	Amy & Andy Hudepohl
10/27:	Christa & Eric Ewing

OOPS! If we've forgotten to list your birthday or anniversary, please let us know by contacting the church office at 614.228.1741, ext. 16, or by emailing bjens@first-church.org.

Church Calendar

Sunday, September 21 (4th-Grade Bible Day)

9 am: Early Worship Service - PH
9 am: Treble Choir - Choir Rm
10 am: Education Hour
11 am: Worship Service - San
12 pm: Fellowship Hour - PH
12:15 pm: Confirmation Meeting - PR
12:30 pm: Confirmation Trip to Hindu Temple
4 pm: Congregational Concert - San
5:15 pm: Concert Reception - PH
9 pm: Compline - San

Tuesday, September 23

12 noon: First Church Care Ministry Team - PR
7 pm: Church Council - LC
7 pm: Personnel Comm - PR

Wednesday, September 24

9 am: Staff Meeting - LC

Thursday, September 25

6:15 pm: First Church Handbells - Bell Rm
7:30 pm: First Church Choir - Choir Rm

Friday, September 26

6 pm: Faith Mission Men's Shelter Meals

Saturday, September 27

10 am: BOBS - LC
2:30 pm: Youth Group Hike - Highbanks Metro Parks
6:30 pm: Youth Lock-In - PH

Sunday, September 28 (Stewardship Kick-Off)

9 am: Early Worship Service - PH
9 am: Treble Choir - Choir Rm
10 am: Education Hour
11 am: Worship Service - San
12 pm: Fellowship Hour - PH
12:30 pm: Youth Group - Zip Line
6:30 pm: Youth Lock-In - PH

Tuesday, September 30

12 noon: First Church Care Ministry Team - PR
7 pm: Deacon's Meeting - PR

Wednesday, October 1

9 am: Staff Meeting - LC
11 pm: Book Study Group - PR
6:30 pm: Youth Ministry Team - Ed Wg Rm D

Thursday, October 2

6:15 pm: First Church Handbells - Bell Rm
7:30 pm: First Church Choir - Choir Rm

Saturday, October 4

8 am: Youth Group Camp Work Day - Tempel'd Hills
6:30 pm: Young Adult Dinner Group - Taj Mahal

Sunday, October 5

9 am: Early Worship Service - PH
9 am: Treble Choir - Choir Rm
10 am: Education Hour
11 am: Worship Service - San
12 noon: Fellowship Hour - PH
12:15 pm: Parish Life - PR
12:30 pm: Confirmation Class - Rm D

Monday, October 6

7 pm: Monday Night Lights - PH & LC
7 pm: Positive Parenting - Rm C

Tuesday, October 7

12 noon: First Church Care Ministry Team - PR
6:30 pm: Children's Ed - Ed Wg Rm C
7 pm: Evangelism & Church Growth - PR
7 pm: Exec. Comm - PFR

Wednesday, October 8

9 am: Staff Meeting - LC

Thursday, October 9

10 am: Eastside Fellowship PR
6:15 pm: First Church Handbells - Bell Rm

7:30 pm: First Church Choir - Choir Rm

Friday, October 10

3:45 pm: Parents for Others - Toddler Rm

Saturday, October 11

10 am: Quilters of First Church - LC

Sunday, October 12 (CROP Walk Sunday)

9 am: Early Worship Service - PH
9 am: Treble Choir - Choir Rm
10 am: Education Hour
11 am: Worship Service - San
12 pm: Fellowship Hour - PH
12:30 pm: Confirmation Class - Ed Wg Rm D

Monday, October 13

9 am: Good Sam Day - San
6:30 pm: Youth Ministry Team - Ed Wg Rm C
7 pm: New Member Class - Choir Rm
7 pm: Trustees - PR

Tuesday, October 14

12 noon: First Church Care Ministry Team - PR
6 pm: Music Committee - PR
7 pm: Mission Committee - PR

Wednesday, October 15

9 am: Newsletter Folding Team - LC
9 am: Staff Meeting - PR
11 pm: Book Study - PR

Thursday, October 16

6:15 pm: First Church Handbells - Bell Rm
7:30 pm: First Church Choir - Choir Rm

Friday, October 17

8:30 am: Confirmation Trip - UCC Cleveland Offices

Saturday, October 18

8:30 am: Confirmation Trip - UCC Cleveland Offices
9 am: House & Grounds - LC
11:45 am: Blessing of the Animals - Church Lawn

Sunday, October 19

9 am: Early Worship Service - PH
9 am: Treble Choir - Choir Rm
10 am: Education Hour
11 am: Worship Service - San
12 pm: Fellowship Hour - PH
4 pm: Congregational Concert - San
5:15 pm: Concert Reception - PH
9 pm: Compline - San

Monday, October 20

6:30 pm: Stephen Ministers - Adult Lib
7 pm: Budget & Finance - LC
7 pm: New Member Class - Choir Rm

Tuesday, October 21

11 am: Tuesdays at 1st Book Study - LC
12:15 pm: Tuesdays at 1st Recital - San
12:45 pm: Tuesdays at 1st Lunch - PH
1:30 pm: First Church Care Ministry Team - PR
7 pm: Church Council - LC

Wednesday, October 22

9 am: Staff Meeting - LC

Thursday, October 23

6:15 pm: First Church Handbells - Bell Rm
7:30 pm: First Church Choir - Choir Rm

Saturday, October 25

9 am: Faith Mission Family Shelter Lunches

Sunday, October 26 (New Members Join)

9 am: Early Worship Service - PH
9 am: Treble Choir - Choir Rm
10 am: Education Hour
11 am: Worship Service - San
12 pm: Fellowship Hour - PH
4 pm: Harvest Party - Brownfield's Home
6 pm: Youth Group - PH

Prayers

Prayer Request: Please let us know of a prayer concern for yourself, a family member or other church member by calling the Rev. Barbara Cunningham at 614.228.1741, ext. 22, by using Prayer Request Cards found in each pew or by emailing bcunningham@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.



October Fellowship Hour

October 5: Deuteronomy - Cindy Deliman
 October 12: Ephesians - Melva Fisher
 October 19: Galatians - Dennis Ginty
 October 26: Haggai - Greg Halbe

September & October Acolyte Schedule

September 28: Katie Kutschbach & Carly Kutschbach
 October 5: Erin Dwenger & Katie Wagner
 October 12: Meg Rhoads & Gabby Murphy
 October 19: Michael Warrick & Reed Chaudhri
 October 26: Ella Kosher & Jacob Kesler

Next Newsletter Deadline

Articles Due: Monday, October 6 by noon
 Email: dmahoney@first-church.org
 Folding Team: Wed., October 15, 9 a.m.

Worship CDs Available:

We are now able to provide you with copies of worship services on CDs. The CDs are available in the literature rack outside the church office after the worship service is finished. A \$1 donation for the CD can be left in a container on the church office counter.

Church Staff

Timothy C. Ahrens.....Senior Minister
 Barbara R. Cunningham.....Minister for Pastoral Care
 Laura A. Tisher.....Minister of Youth & Young Adults
 Marti Rideout.....Interim Minister of Music
 Mark S. Williams.....Director of Christian Education
 G. Dene Barnard.....Organist Choirmaster Emeritus
 Sharon Leidheiser.....Business Administrator
 Martha Worth.....Program Manager
 Stan Parron.....Building Manager
 Barb Jenks Triffon.....Communications
 Denny Mahoney.....Admin. Assistant to Senior Minister
 Kelvin Murphy.....Custodian
 Nikki Boop.....Custodian
 Eric Trepkoski.....Custodian
 Caroline Sansbury.....Nursery Staff
 Jessica Yaeger.....Nursery Staff
 Kelsey Weber.....Nursery Staff
 Linda Mumford.....Wedding Coordinator
 Jane Leidheiser.....Wedding Coordinator
 Fran Panek.....Wedding Coordinator

Church Council

Thomas Stewart.....Moderator
 Kay Metz.....Vice-Moderator
 Carol Gallagher.....Secretary
 David Holt.....Treasurer
 Phil Stichter.....Trustee Chair
 Randy Hoffman.....Administration Commissioner
 Al Waddell.....Church Growth Commissioner
 Pam Kallner.....Education Commissioner
 Bill Rhoads.....House & Grounds Commissioner
 Beverly Cook.....Mission Commissioner
 Amy Beymer.....Parish Life Commissioner
 Craig Oyler.....Deacon
 Sandy Bennett.....Deacon
 Drew Wade.....Member-at-large
 Duan Cannon.....Member-at-large
 Stan Lange.....Member-at-large

**~ REMEMBER YOUR LOVED ONES ~
 WITH A DEDICATION OF FLOWERS**
 Contact Marty Worth at 614.228.1741, ext. 12,
 marty@first-church.org

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
444 E. Broad St.
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3885

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DATED MATERIAL - VERY IMPORTANT
PLEASE DELIVER: *Monday, September 22, 2008*

TO:



The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
444 E. Broad St. Col., OH 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