

“Imagine EVEN More”

By Rev. Tim Ahrens

We have an inspired faith led at First Church by inspiring church leaders. Look around! They are on fire with the Spirit of God. With resolve and determination, the Outgoing 2014 Church Council, coupled with dynamic leaders entering Church Council for 2015 have called us to “Imagine EVEN More!” As one Trustee put it during their meeting January, “We have not finished what we started”....Our ‘Imagine More’ Stewardship Campaign is not yet complete. So, let’s finish this with joy.” Beautifully said! We now stand just over 90% of our adjusted goal of \$735,000. We need about \$60,000 more in pledged commitments for 2015 to reach our goal.

We can do this.

How are we going to do this – you ask? Simply this, if every pledging household of faith steps up and adds \$255 to their annual pledge we can do this. Knowing that some can’t do this, we encourage those who have the means to do so, step up even a bit more. We can also add new pledging households to the mix. If you are reading this and say – “Oops! I forgot to pledge for 2015!” – email Sharon Leidheiser NOW – sleidheiser@first-church.org or call the church office 614-228-1741, ext. 11 or go to the church website www.first-church.org and pledge. Simple. If you are wondering, the average pledging household gives around \$2500 each year. But, give what you can. We are also building into the 2015 plans a new plan for fundraising ... so if you are able to be a part of our fundraising team, let me know. You can also contact Sharon.

We have the shortest month of the year to take this LEAP of faith!

We can do this. Please join me as together we ALL “Imagine EVEN More!”

Love and blessings,

Rev. Tim Ahrens

“Home”

By Joe Baszynski, Treasurer

Home. The word itself conjures, in most, feelings of warmth, safety, and family. While many would relate home to a single, physical space, it doesn’t have to be. It can travel with you. It is a feeling, a sense of belonging.

First Church is home.

I could not have imagined four years ago that I would find my home in downtown Columbus. It was by chance that my wife Nikki and I heard about First Church. A dear friend of ours (the son of Kent Shimeall and Lisa Morris) mentioned that it might be a good fit. His recommendation could not have come at a better time. While I do not remember the sermon specifically (sorry Rev. Ahrens), I do remember how I felt. Warm, safe, loved, and at home.

Since that day, things have changed. Life has changed. I officially joined the church in 2013, not really knowing what that meant. I’d attend church more regularly. I’d contribute financially through loose plate offering. Check and check. In 2014, I was persuaded ever so eloquently by Gerry Worth to put my name forward for the position of Treasurer-Elect. What an experience! Over the past year, I’ve had the opportunity to meet more members, contribute to the direction of our Congregation, and understand and appreciate all that goes into maintaining our home. This connection and experience prompted Nikki and me to make our first pledge in 2014. We’d never done so before. What did it mean?

The First Church home is beautiful. It is active. It is making a difference! The contributions of our Church family make that possible. I now understand the importance and impact of our time, talents, and wealth. I understand now that pledging is planning. Imagine how our Church will impact Columbus and beyond in the year to come. Imagine how many lives will be changed and circumstances improved. Imagine how many of our brothers and sisters will find their home. I welcome you to join Nikki and me in Imagining EVEN More.

“Home” ...continued

If you have not yet made your pledge or would like to Imagine EVEN More, please consider implementing one of the following methods.

Ways to make your pledge:

- Pledge card (in the church office)
 - Give to deacon or put in the collection plate
- Online at our website: <http://www.first-church.org/AnnualGivingForm.aspx>
- Via confidential email to either Sharon Leidheiser (Sleidheiser@first-church.org) or Tim Ahrens (Tahrens@first-church.org)
- Over the phone to a stewardship committee member or staff person (confidential)

Creative ways to pay your pledge:

1. Check
2. Bill Pay through your bank
3. Payroll Deduction-speak to Sharon Leidheiser
4. Cash (the green stuff is always good)
5. Cashier's check
6. Stock Transfer to Church Account (Charles Schwab account)-speak to Sharon Leidheiser
7. Credit card through Faith Street: <https://www.faithstreet.com/church/first-congregational-church-of-columbus-columbus-oh/giving>
8. Sign over a check you received from someone else or a reimbursement check from the church

Make Plans for the Lenten Season

Shrove Tuesday is February 17, the day before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. The term “shrove” comes from “shriving” – to confess or repent and seek absolution. This was once a common practice on the day. We encourage all to plan activities that will help your family be ready for the solemn season ahead. First, have a family “game plan.” Call a family meeting. Talk about what Lent means and why it is important. Discuss where, when and how to observe Lent together. For example, will you devote a certain time each week or each day for activities or Bible study?

Next, consider adopting one or more spiritual disciplines. Spiritual disciplines are traditions that can be practiced throughout Lent. They can help us grow closer to God by cutting out distractions and refocusing our time and talents. They include giving things up, taking things on and participation.

To encourage participation, it may help to guide children in picking something that's realistic for their age and maturity. It can be as simple as devoting time to learning a prayer or memorizing a short Bible passage. Adopt a spiritual discipline as a family, such as giving up some or all TV and devoting the extra time to mission work or Bible study. Mark a chart to check weekly progress.

Another way to start the season is to attend the fourth annual Pancake Dinner at First Church. Making pancakes was a good way to use up all the fat, cream and eggs in the house before Lent fasting began.

This old tradition inspired the term “Fat Tuesday” or in French, “Mardi Gras.” It also inspired the pancake dinner that many congregations hold today.

Lenton Season...continued

The First Church youth will host a pancake dinner on Tuesday, February 17, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. You may purchase tickets in advance after each service or at the door. Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$3 for children 12 and under. This is always a great event.

If you can't attend the pancake dinner, then throw your own family pancake dinner. Have children place fruit over their pancakes in a cross shape. If family members are going to give up favorite food or drinks, you may want to include these in your family dinner, too.



why pancakes? well, why not? what more could you ask on a cold night than a stack of steaming, buttery, sweet pancakes to fill you?

they have liturgical meaning, too: shrove tuesday is a day for confession and using up eggs and butter before the sacrifices of lent

please join us

what: Pancake Dinner hosted by First Church Youth Ministry
when: February 17, 2015 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
where: First Congregational Church Parish Hall
cost: \$5.00 adults, \$3.00 children 12 and under

all proceeds will increase funding for our mission work this summer!

Revs. Emily Corzine and Dan Clark: A Time of Transition In the Associate Minister Office

By Rev. Tim Ahrens

February 1 is a big day at First Church! We welcome Rev. Emily Krause Corzine to the staff as our NEW Associate Minister! Emily brings a vibrant spirit and faith, a holy and loving presence, a spiritual grounding and a great pastoral heart and organizational mind to our staff and to the Associate Minister position. I might add that Emily is the youngest Associate Minister in the past 50 years! Welcome Emily! With the Youth leading our worship, she will have a limited part in worship on 2/1 but Monday morning, she begins in the office. We welcome Emily to our staff as she brings her gifts and blessings to the ministry and mission of First Church.

For the first two weeks during the week days, Dan and Emily will work shoulder to shoulder in this transition. Dan will leave our employment on February 13. He will begin a new job very soon.

Time of Transition...continued

How we will miss Rev. Dan Clark! Since he walked through our doors in April, 2014, he has captured our hearts and minds. He helped us Imagine More as he skillfully guided us through our best Stewardship Campaign in history! He rejuvenated the new members classes and processes; under his leadership, we welcomed 25 adults and 11 of their children from June through December – including our largest class in 4 years in June. Along with Kevin Jones, he restructured the 9 a.m. worship service, and with these changes, we saw growth from April to December. We now average over 50 in worship each week! He gathered the young adults for fellowship and introduced lots of people to one another. He faithfully and joyfully staffed all the assignments given to him. He put on a tie a few times. He borrowed my Sunday stoles and he led worship with joy and a centered sense of spirituality. In the office, he followed through on all his commitments, and did so with creativity, laughter and love. On January 25, he received two standing ovations – one following his sermon and as we started the prayers of the people, and the second at the Congregational Meeting. Your quick response to the gift for his leaving was a sure and certain sign of your love for him and his children – Jude, Lucy and Sadie. As his colleague and friend, I am sorry to see him leave as our Interim Associate Minister. Now, as his pastor and friend, I look forward to the days we walk together in faith at First Church. Thank you Rev. Dan Clark! Job Well Done!

So, we say “Fare thee well” and “welcome” as a church family this week. Please read the articles by each pastor in this newsletter. Please pray for our entire staff during this time of transition. We are ready to settle into our new reality!

First Words

By Rev. Emily Krause-Corzine, Associate Minister

It is a real joy to be called to First Congregational Church, UCC beginning February 1. As I have been praying for you and preparing for my time with you to begin, I wanted to share with you my excitement for what lies ahead for us at First Congregational Church, UCC. There is excitement about getting to know more of you. There is excitement about deepening connections and relationships. There is excitement about laughter we will share and the stories we will tell as we get to know one another. There is always excitement about how God works through us to enrich our lives and those around us.

I grew up in Granville, Ohio through the second grade and then graduated from high school in Cambridge, Ohio. I loved school. I loved sports. I loved band. I loved traveling. (I still love all those things). Both my father and mother, both sets of grandparents were Presbyterians and faithful church leaders for years. I was given a strong foundation in my faith life through my family. I went to Denison University and graduated with a degree in Biology and Physical Education. My first career was in Athletic Training and I served at Denison for seven years. When I returned to Columbus after graduate school, I found Broad Street Presbyterian Church (just down the street) as a wonderful church home. I became active and engaged in opportunities that deepened my faith and built relationships.



One of those relationships that developed was with Jeff Corzine, my now husband of seven years. Yep, we met at church! We dated long distance while I attended Princeton Theological Seminary. We were married 3 weeks after I graduated in 2008 and have lived in Dublin ever since. I have served as a hospital chaplain and in various roles in Presbyterian churches. In June of 2013, we welcomed our daughter Camryn into the world. What a joy and challenge parenthood can be, and we are especially thankful for good health, good tempers, and good laughter, as we are firmly entrenched in toddlerhood.

I am grateful for the work and discernment of the Associate Minister Search Committee and Gerry Worth, their chairperson. This is an exciting step to be called by God to faithfully serve with you in ministry at First Congregational. There are many opportunities to care and nurture one another in our community of faith as we also find ways to serve our neighbors in our community. I hope that over the next few months we'll have opportunities to get to know one another and find mutual points of connection.

May the next steps on our journey together be Spirit-filled as we continue to discern what God is up to and what God is calling us to be and do in this place and in the world. I am excited to come alongside all of you as your Associate Minister.

Grace and Peace,

Emily

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

By Rev. Dan Clark, Interim Associate Minister



First Church is a radically welcoming congregation. I personally found this to be true. I came to the position of Interim Associate Minister April 6, 2014, just 10 days after my divorce was final, and 5 weeks after my 5 year stint at Upper Arlington Lutheran Church came to an abrupt and surprising end because of my divorce. (Honestly, I was probably a short timer there anyway, being the token lefty and all.) So, in the Spring of 2014, I found myself in need. Not only was I in need of employment, practically speaking, but I was also in need of a community of faith who could show me that the love of God was for me too. First Church excelled in this regard.

It has been an honor to work with the Church Vitality, Church Growth, and Justice & Mercy Commissions. I enjoyed the opportunity to help shape and reshape the 9 a.m. worship service to set it up for growth. I worked hard with the Resource Task Force and Stewardship Campaign to help increase the capacity for First Church to live its mission in Columbus and beyond. I take seriously the art and craft of preaching, to invite people into new ways of thinking and feeling about the life and love of God in the word. I have loved the opportunity to preach here at First Church 10 times.

This month marks the end of my time as Interim Associate Minister at First Congregational Church. I'm so thankful for the opportunity to work and connect and serve and heal here. Moving forward... I will be working shoulder to shoulder with Rev. Emily for the first 2 weeks of February. I am delighted at her arrival. She brings valuable skills and a clear calling to the office of Associate Minister. Additionally, I am continuing in the process of moving my ministerial credentials to the United Church of Christ with the Department of Authorized Ministry of the Central Southeast Ohio Association. I have found a new spiritual home among you. Finally, as mentioned earlier, I became a member of First Congregational Church on Pentecost 2014 with 11 other people. My children, Jude (who loves being in Treble Choir!), Lucy (who can't wait to be in Treble Choir in the Fall!), Sadie (who is the best singer of them all!), and I look forward to being a part of First Church in the months and years to come. I plan to pull back for some time, to get the emotional and spiritual rest I need, as well as to make room for Rev. Emily to make the role her own. I look forward to celebrating resurrection life with my friends and family at First Church on Easter!

Finally, thank you so much to Rev. Tim, my colleagues, Mark, Kevin, Marty, Sharon, Amy, and Tom, the office volunteers, Council, Trustees, Deacons, all members (especially the new ones!), the choir, and all those who find a spiritual home at First Church for making these last 10 months so meaningful. Peace to you, now and always.

The Energy of Connection: An Invitation to Membership

By Rev. Dan Clark, Interim Associate Minister

Everyone wants to be part of something. This is why we play on teams and sing in choirs. This is why we march in parades and watch live television. All of these experiences connect us to the energy of connection. It is the same with membership at a church. At First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, we are committed to being a faith community where everyone – no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey – can connect with others around the uniting love of God.

Aristotle summarized an ancient and global concept that is firmly ingrained in our collective conscious: "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." And then St. Paul encouraged us to live connected to one another: "rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn." These thoughts, too, are about the energy of connection. First Church is greater as a community when we rejoice and mourn together, when we play and pray, and worship and eat, and sing and serve together. It's so exciting to be part of something, to feel the energy that's stirred up when people really connect.

On Monday February 9th at 7pm in the Parlor, you are invited to join First Church's next New Member Class to explore a greater connection here. This class will then be recognized in the 9AM service and received in the 11AM service on Sunday, February 15th. If you have any questions or want to sign up, please contact me directly at dclark@first-church.org or 614.228.1741 x 21. Let's connect.

Doctoral Studies in Chicago

By Rev. Tim Ahrens

I was in Chicago from January 26-30 working with my cohort of doctoral candidates reading, critiquing, rewriting and representing our professional papers. There in the Windy City, I worked every day from before sunrise to late at night to finish this fourth draft of my dissertation. With four other colleagues and our professor, Dr. Michael Montgomery, we were getting lots of feedback on the good, the bad and the ugly parts of our dissertations. Beginning February 1, I finish the second half of a class on "Leadership for Transformation." Along with the final one or two drafts of my paper, I can see the end coming! I return in mid-April to present and defend my paper. If all goes well, I will graduate on May 17, 2015 from a synagogue in the heart of Chicago! I may go to the only seminary which graduates from a synagogue. How cool is this?

Thanks again for your interest, prayers, support and care for me during this 3 ½ year doctoral process. The finish line is only 3 ½ MONTHS away. With your prayers and support and the love and care of my wife and family, I will make it to the finish line!

Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi

Wednesday Book Study Begins Rabbi's book about Jesus February 4th!

By Rev. Tim Ahrens

I hope you can join a great group of people (12-20 in number!) who meet the first and third Wednesday in the church parlor from 11a.m. – 12 noon. We read books and share our thoughts about them. Our next book is Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi by Amy-Jill Levine. I have attached part of an article found in the Boston Globe, September, 2014. Read this... come and read with us!

WHO WAS JESUS, exactly? Depending on your perspective, there are a lot of potential answers: a wandering Jewish mystic; the son of God on Earth; a radical political agitator in the ancient Near East.

Now the New Testament scholar Amy-Jill Levine is offering another one: literary master. In a new book, "Short Stories by Jesus," Levine argues that to understand how Jesus captured people's imaginations, we need to appreciate him as a profoundly gifted storyteller, one who worked through the medium of parables – and that as modern, non-parable-reading people, we have lost the ability to see his genius.

The parables of Jesus are recounted in all four Gospels, and some are so well known we use them as cultural shorthand – the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son. Though they're often treated almost as children's stories, Levine suggests they're nothing of the sort. Levine, who teaches at Vanderbilt University and wrote the 2007 bestseller "The Misunderstood Jew," offers new translations of the parables in her new book, recovering the sense of provocation and challenge they would have presented to their first-century audiences. The Jesus we see here came up with inventive ways to challenge his listeners, and didn't allow them easy answers or room for self-congratulation.

Levine, who grew up in North Dartmouth, MA, developed the book in part through frequent classes and lectures at universities, synagogues, Christian churches, and even a maximum security prison. She says it can be complicated to be Jewish and extol Jesus, but says the stories are "absolutely fabulous" pieces of world literature she wants people to appreciate anew.

Sermon Series – "The Essence of Christianity"

By Rev. Tim Ahrens

On Wednesday, January 21, something special happened in our Book Study. As we came to the close of Marcus Borg's little book, "Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time," we released something important. We are Christians because the essence of this faith calls us to a deep place of love, relationship, compassion and care. Our friendships and relationships with Jesus and one another are centered in love. We are called by God to follow and be compassionate and caring. We may have learned this (in part) in books. But, mostly, we learned it from our parents, grandparents, teachers, pastors and those in the fellowship of faith called Christian. I was deeply moved by the testimonies of faith shared that day.

Later on January 21, I was heartbroken to find out that author, seminal thinker and teacher, Marcus Borg died and passed to eternal life. That night in my prayers, I decided to offer a sermon series and Lenten Small Group series on what makes us Christian. What is the Essence of Christianity? Essence is defined as “the intrinsic nature or indispensable quality of something...that determines its character.” So the core values and characteristic determinates for our Christian faith are: Beloving, Following, Justice, Compassion, Hope, Love and Resurrection Faith. I hope you join Rev. Emily Corzine and me on this journey into the essence of Christianity.

Lenten / Easter Sermon Series: The Essence of Christianity

February 18 – Ash Wednesday – services at noon and 7:30pm

Sermon: “The Essence of Christianity” (Part I of VIII)

Texts: Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm 51:1-17; II Corinthians 5:20b-6:10; Matthew 6:1-1, 16-21

February 22 – First Sunday in Lent

Sermon: “Beloving: Sharing Our Love and Blessings” (Part II of VIII)

Texts: Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; I Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15

March 1- Second Sunday in Lent

Communion Meditation: “Following: Trusting Enough to Move” (Part III of VIII)

Texts: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22:23-31, Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38

March 8 – Third Sunday in Lent

Sermon: “Justice: Words and Actions for Change” (Part IV of VIII)

Texts: Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19, I Corinthians 1:18-35; John 2:13-22

March 15 – Fourth Sunday in Lent

Sermon: “Compassion: Receiving What We Need Though We May Not Know It” (Part V of VIII)

Texts: Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:1-21

March 22 – Fifth Sunday in Lent

Sermon: “Hope: A Testimony of the Heart” (Part VI of VIII)

Texts: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

March 29- Palm/Passion Sunday

Sermon: “Love: Laying Down Your Life” (Part VII of VIII)

Texts: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11; Mark 14-15:47

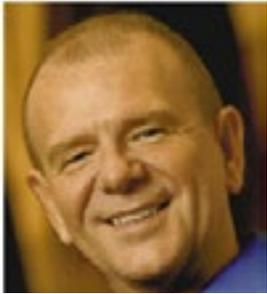
April 6 – Easter Sunday – 7am, 9am, 11am

Sermon: “Resurrection Faith: New Life Rising from the Dead” (Part VIII of VIII)

Texts: Acts 10:34-43; Isaiah 25:6-9; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; I Corinthians 15:1-11; John 20:1-18



Valentine's Day Youth Fudge Sale



The youth of First Church are selling "heart-shaped" homemade fudge after each worship service in the Parish Hall and through the week during office hours from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. February 1-8. The cost is \$3 for a 4 ounce heart. We will also have chocolate, chocolate with caramel, peanut butter and limited buckeye fudge in our regular half-pound and pound boxes. You also can place orders for additional amounts. Sales benefit the youth summer mission trip.

Spring Retreat Set for April 17-19

This year's spring retreat will be Friday evening, April 17, through Sunday morning, April 19, at Pilgrim Hills camp and retreat center. It is an hour northeast of Columbus off Route 62 at Brinkhaven. Please mark your calendars and plan to bring your whole family or just yourself.

Brochure and registration forms will be in the church office and on the Web site after March 9. Deadline for registration is April 10. We have space for 90 people – let's fill it! See Mark S. Williams for more information.

It's Time for Camp Registration!

If the Outdoor Ministries summer camp information has arrived, can spring be far behind? Everyone is ready to plan some fun in the sun and that's just what camp is. There are camps for kindergarten children and first graders with a grandparent. Weeklong camps are for children who have completed second grade and older. There are camps for teens and camps with themes. There are camps for adults and even one for families. All summer camp programs are happening at Pilgrim Hills. Many of the "staple" Temple Hills events have moved over, including Grandparents/Grandchild camps, MMADD, Outpost camps and the Pool camps (Love the Pool and Still Loving the Pool). Forms are in the church office.

Registration has now begun!! Camp weeks fill up fast!!! Don't wait too long!!!

Online Registration is now OPEN!

Camp schedule and descriptions are available online at:

<http://www.journeythehills.org>. Once you've decided on a camp, just click one of the "Register Online" buttons to complete your registration and make your payment.

First Congregational Church has always been a strong supporter of the Outdoor Ministries Summer Camp Program by encouraging participation and by offering scholarships for campers. Thanks to the generosity of longtime member Alma Keeler, we are able to offer a 50% camp scholarship on the registration fee (after the \$75 deposit) to any First Church child or youth who wants to go to camp. A request for these funds must be made by the parent /guardian. This is not automatic as in the past.

To take advantage of this scholarship you must do several things:

- 1.) Decide which camp you want to attend.
- 2.) Send in your \$75 deposit as soon as possible with the 2015 camp registration form.
- 3.) Send the remaining amount owed to the Ohio Conference at least two weeks prior to your camp;
- 4.) Have a wonderful time!

Due to the increase in camp registration this year, First Church also will offer additional scholarships for those families who need extra help. Any child who wants to go to camp should not be stopped due to financial concerns of the family. For more information about camp, please contact Mark S. Williams. Deadline for early registration and First Church campership request is March 31.



2015 Camp Schedule:

<http://www.journeythehills.org/>

Education

Black Lives Matter... A Continuing Conversation

By Rev. Tim Ahrens

Based on the turnout on January 11 and 18, this congregation cares about the "Black Lives Matters" conversation. With over 40 in attendance on January 11 and 56 on January 18, we had too little time to dig deep enough into sacred conversations around race. On February 1 at 10 a.m. in the Parish Hall, we will finish this round of conversations with MarShawn McCarrel and his friends from the Ohio Students Association (OSA). MarShawn is an artist and student leader at OSU. He has spoken in a variety of public events on the concerns rising from police shootings in Ferguson, Missouri; Cleveland and Beavercreek, Ohio and New York City. Come and hear MarShawn this Sunday.

The conversation doesn't end on Sunday. We are just beginning. I would like to have us continue these important conversations into the future. If you are interested, let me know : tahrens@first-church.org or call 614-228-1741, ext. 13. Let's move into circles of sacred conversation and action for the future. This really matters. Join me.

Lenten Small Groups Begin Soon

Joyfully we step into Lent the middle of February. The small groups will meet four times throughout March. Each small group meeting will be 60-90 minutes. We hope that every member takes time to join with others in their community to pray, study and grow in relationship with God and one another.

Attention Middle and High School Youth

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

The Youth Groups will be traveling to Snow Trails for a fun evening of snow tubing on Friday, February 27, 2015. The cost is only \$10 for each youth. We will meet in the parking lot of Costco in Polaris at 4:30pm. Deadline to register is February 24. More information will be posted throughout the church. For more information, contact Mark S. Williams.

Divinity and Diversity Conference

Noor Islamic Cultural Center (NICC), located at 5001 Wilcox Road, Dublin, Ohio 43016, will be hosting a 3-day, National Interfaith Conference on February 19 through 21, 2015. We are expecting local and national interfaith leaders and speakers to gather in this conference themed – Divinity and Diversity: Building our beloved community together! Please register and attend this conference as it's what we all need to do to increase our understanding about each other. If you or your organization would like to be a sponsoring organization then please contact NICC. We will love to see all/ as many local faith based organizations be part of the sponsorship banner for Shoulder to Shoulder, to show our support for all the good work they are doing.

On behalf of NICC and it's leadership team, you are cordially invited to attend this event. Part of the event registration also includes a leadership banquet dinner that will be hosted by Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) at Makoy Center in Hilliard on Thursday, February 19 at 6 p.m. ***On Thursday, February 19 from 3:00 - 4:30 p.m., Rev. Tim Ahrens will be leading a session entitled "Blessed Are All Our Children"***

This entire interfaith effort is being partnered by Shoulder-to-Shoulder (National Interfaith Campaign based in Washington-DC), Safe Alliances of Interfaith Leaders (SAIL) of Columbus and Noor Islamic Cultural Center (NICC).



From the Minister of Music

By Kevin Jones, Minister of Music

(kjones@first-church.org)



Enter to Worship. Depart to Serve.

I attended a mini-conference over the last few days. It was a midwinter gathering of the Association of Anglican Musicians – a professional group to which I have belonged for about 11 years. This conference of clergy and musicians gathered to discuss and explore matters concerning liturgy, music and preaching. It was a vibrant conference – stimulating and challenging. Many persons who care deeply about the organized worship of God in the church are often criticized as being ‘God-centric’ and overly concerned about matters not directly connected to the “person in the pew.” This has been true over time and in every denomination, and remains true today. Surely, one needs balance, and with that, I agree wholeheartedly. I would, however, like to submit that what we who craft, mold and envision worship on behalf of the entire gathered community, are here to facilitate worship. We are here to attempt to be windows through which you can encounter the Divine. Clearly the planners and church mothers and fathers of First Congregational Church thought that the trappings of churchy things were important, too. If they did not consider them so, we might not be joining together in so splendid a building that was carefully and painstakingly crafted and planned to support the worship of God. From the colors of the stone, the gentle early Gothic arches, the slate on the floor, the carved oak of the pews, chancel decorations, lectern and pulpit—the windows that are truly a Bible in glass and light. All of these earthly “things” work together to take us from the busyness of our daily lives and, just for a time, we breathe. We take time to find quiet. We come together as a community of persons with diverse ideas and thoughts and feelings to find Sanctuary, to encounter God. This building is not the church, surely, but it IS Sanctuary, and it pulls together many things that help us find God on our own terms and in our own time. It is a blessing and we are fortunate to be stewards of this place for the here and now.

At this Conference’s session on Liturgy, the Rev. Erika Takacs, Associate Rector, St. Mark’s Church, Philadelphia, ended her presentation with the following poem by the 17th century divine English poet, George Herbert (1593-1633). I was very moved by it and I reprint it for you here.

The Church-floore.

MARK you the floore? that square & speckled stone,
Which looks so firm and strong,
Is *Patience*:

And th’ other black and grave, where with each one
Is checker’d all along,
Is *Humilitie*:

The gentle rising, which on either hand
Leads to the Quire above,
Is *Confidence*:

But the sweet cement, which in one sure band
Ties the whole frame, is *Love*
And *Charitie*.

Hither sometimes Sinne steals, and stains
The marbles neat and curious veins:
But all is cleansed when the marble weeps.
Sometimes Death, puffing at the Doore,
Blows all the dust about the floore:
But while he thinks to spoil the room, he sweeps.
Blest be the *Architect*, whose art
Could build so strong in a weak heart.

— from The Temple (1633) by George Herbert

Music News

Choir News

Liturgical Appearance Schedules

Treble Choir

- Rehearsals Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 at 9 a.m.; Sing in Worship Feb. 8 at 11 a.m.

Teen Choir

- Rehearsals Feb. 1 at 8:30 a.m., Feb 8, 15, 22 at 9 a.m.; Sing in Worship Feb. 1 at 9 and 11 a.m. (Youth Sunday)

First Church Ringers

- Rehearsals Feb 5, 19, 26 (n.b. – no rehearsal Feb. 12); Ring in Worship Feb. 1 at 11 a.m.

First Church Choir

- Rehearsals Feb 5, 19, 26 (n.b. – no rehearsal Feb. 12); Sing in Worship Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 and Sing Ash Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 7:30 p.m. (call at 6:45 p.m.)

Handbells Columbus plays a concert on Sunday, February 22 at 4 p.m.

The very popular local handbell ensemble, Handbells Columbus, returns to the First Church stage on Sunday, February 22, at 4 p.m. The 14-member group, under the direction of Jennifer Fry and Albert Adcock, plays six octaves of Malmark handbells, and five octaves of choir chimes. They play a wide variety of music including handbells with piano and organ. Handbells Columbus is a community handbell ensemble that was formed in the fall of 2006 to provide advanced ringing opportunities for Central Ohio handbell ringers, a number of whom were members of the former Symphonic Handbells of Columbus. The ringers are church musicians and business professionals from Columbus and the surrounding suburbs. In 2008 the group commissioned composer Karen Buckwalter to write a piece for handbells and concert organist, which was premiered at a concert on February 22, 2009, at First Congregational Church in Columbus. The group also commissioned composer Anna Laura page to write 3 different pieces for handbells and piano. All were premiered at First Congregational Church in Columbus. The concert also features David Lehnus, oboe, Eileen Huston, piano, and our own G. Dene Barnard, organist. Make plans now to attend this historically well-attended event.

Concerts at First Church
2014-2015

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
444 East Broad Street † Columbus, Ohio 43215
614.228.1741
concertsatfirstchurch.org

Handbells Columbus

SUN FEB 22 4 PM Freewill Offering

Handbells Columbus plays a program of favorites old and new.
Conducted by Albert Adcock and Jennifer Fry.
With organist G. Dene Barnard, pianist Eileen Huston and oboist David Lehnus.

First Tuesdays

Tuesday, February 3, 2015
12:15 p.m.

G. Dene Barnard, Organist

playing music by Buxtehude, Wilbur Held and
Mendelssohn



First Congregational Church
444 East Broad Street • Columbus, Ohio 43215
614.228.1741 † www.first-church.org



Parking lots behind and on the west side of the Church.
More information can be found at:

www.concertsatfirstchurch.org



You are invited!

The entire community is invited to a Pasta Supper/Silent Auction/Cabaret on Sunday, February 22nd, at 5:30 p.m. The First Church Choir is producing this event as one of two remaining fundraisers for the 2015 Pilgrimage to Gloucester Cathedral. Tickets will be sold at \$15 per person which includes a full supper of baked ziti, bread and salad. Beverages will also be included. Homemade desserts will also be served. A Silent Auction will be held throughout the evening. Entertainment will include the original operetta, *The Magic Fruit*, written by our very own John Carter and Mary Kay Beall! Please make plans to attend now and have a fantastic, homemade Italian dinner, chances to bid on a wide range of wonderful silent auction items, and enjoy some great entertainment. Tickets will be available from any choir member, from the main office or from Marty Worth. See you on the 22nd!

First Tuesdays

Organist G. Dene Barnard presents an organ recital on Tuesday, February 3rd, at 12:15 p.m. featuring the music of Dieterich Buxtehude, Wilbur Held and Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. Since 2005, Mr. Barnard has been Organist/Choirmaster Emeritus at First Church. Lunch is available immediately following the concert in the Parish Hall for a donation of \$5.

You are cordially invited to a

Pasta Supper, Silent Auction and Choir Cabaret

on

Sunday, February 22, 2015

following the 4 p.m. Congregational Concert by *Handbells Columbus*

in the

First Congregational Church Parish Hall

to benefit the

2015 First Church Choir Pilgrimage to Gloucester Cathedral

Tickets may be purchased **in advance** from any Choir member, the main office, or via telephone at 614.228.1741

Tickets are only \$15 per person!

Great selection of Silent Auction items to bid on and win!

*Dinner includes Salad, Italian Bread, Italian Pasta,
Homemade Desserts & Beverages.*

Live cabaret entertainment by Choir members during dinner including

John Carter and Mary Kay Beall's The Magic Fruit.

5:30 Silent Auction Viewing & Initial Bids
6:00 Dinner is served!
6:30 Cabaret, Act I
6:50 Final Bidding
7:10 Cabaret, Act II
7:30 Auction Winners Announced

Church News

Save the Date...

Thursday Fellowship –Thursday, February 12 at 10:00 a.m. in the Parlor. Tom Luff will provide an overview of repairs and improvements to our building.

Missing Something?

Please check the Lost and Found drawer in the church office. Also, there are three light-weight black men's coats in the coat room. If you think one of these might belong to you, please claim it before February 16.

Did You Know.....

.....that the Sanctuary flowers on Sunday are part of the ministry of First Church. Each Sunday the Deacons make bouquets from the arrangement to deliver to those on the prayer list. If there has been a dedication, a bouquet is given to the family.

.....that the Carrie Schumacher endowment fund provides flower funds in the amount of \$1,200 approximately for the year.

.....that the cost of the flowers each Sunday is \$65. The trustees fund can cover the cost of 17 Sundays. Easter and Christmas Sundays are special Sundays with dedications of lilies and poinsettias.

.....that some families dedicate flowers yearly on a Sunday that holds significant meaning to them.

.....that there are 52 Sundays in 2015. In order to have a fresh arrangement every Sunday that can then be given to people on the care and concern list, it is important that we have a dedication 35 Sundays this year. Please consider dedicating Sunday flowers in honor of or in memory of someone or in celebration of a special occasion as part of the ministry to our shut ins and those on our prayer list.

.....that the flower chart will be in Parish Hall during Fellowship Hour this Sunday as an opportunity to sign up.

.....that you can contact Marty Worth if you have questions 228-1741 x 14 or mworth@first-church.org.



Church News. . . .

FIRST CHURCH JOYS AND CONCERNS

MEMBERS: The family of Jim Roehm; Val Stichter; Margene Whittenburg; Kim Kutschbach; Gunter Garbe; Greg Halbe; Grace Glaros; Bernie Martin; Van Barndt; Ray Pendell; Wib Smith; Amos White; and for families and friends who continue to mourn the loss of loved ones.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY: Ben Wiant; Dorothy Everett, mother of Gayle Henderson; Wallace Tanksley, friend of the church, on the loss of his sister, Marsha Tanksley-Traylor; Patricia Lightbody, mother of Mary Lightbody; Todd, son of Nancy Evans; Alex Kreider, nephew of Mary Anne Jacobson; Betty Garrison, mother of Kim Hopcraft; Rev. Floyd Starr; Dottie Johnson, aunt of Tori Stucke; and all those suffering from the effects of mental illness; and prayers for Nigeria and Paris.

Recent Celebration Gifts to First Church

By Bill Johannes and Jane Werum

- Given to the Starr-Wingfield Furnishings Fund by Rupert (Twink) Starr
- Given to the Dorinda White Youth Fund in Dorinda's memory by Keith White
- Given to the Organ Preservation Fund by John and Cindy Deliman
- Given to the Remembrance Fund in celebration of the lives of Wanda Ray by Joe Ray and Jack Davis by Karin Stork-Whitson

Support your favorite ministry by making a gift in honor or remembrance of a loved today by completing the gold Celebration Gift form found in the church pews. And don't forget to include an endowment fund in your will or estate plan. For more information, please go to www.first-church.org/EndowmentFunds.aspx



*Fair Trade, Organic
Dark Chocolate Hearts*

On Sale

February 1 at the

Coffee Cart in

Parish Hall

\$8.00 a Box

Great Gifts

Justice and Mercy

Guests from Deep Griha

Neela Onawale and her daughter, Ashlesha, are traveling to Columbus to share stories and to tell us about the valuable assistance that Deep Griha is providing for the people of the slums of Pune, India. Neela and her husband, Bashkar, founded Deep Griha almost forty years ago, and Ashlesha has recently become the deputy executive director.

Neela and Ashlesha will be the featured guest at the annual Bollywood and Barbeque event this year. You will have an opportunity to hear about the work of Deep Griha from Neela and Ashlesha, as well as from a few families, including young people who visited Deep Griha last year. There will also be opportunities for henna painting, craft projects for young children, and entertainment by young dancers from Dublin Community Church.

Please plan to attend the event on February 22, 2015 from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. at First Community Church's North Campus. Dinner will be catered by City Barbeque. Tickets are \$10 for adults, and \$5 for children ages 12 and under. Online registration is available.

Neela and Ashlesha will be in Columbus for two weeks, and they will participate in a worship service at First Community Church and will meet with groups of young people. They will also visit our Deep Griha partner churches, Dublin Community Church and our own First Congregational Church.

If you would like to help a child in Pune by becoming a sponsor, go to www.deepgrihausa.org for more information. There you will also find more information about the various services provided by Deep Griha.

“THANKS” from the Gladden Community House Staff

“From the bottom of their hearts”, is how the staff member thanked 1st Church for the generous giving at Christmas. The offering of over \$1,200 provided food for 264 Christmas boxes for homebound residents and families identified by staff as in need. \$500 was used to buy \$20 gift cards for teens and senior residents.

And additional thanks to everyone who voted or helped spread the word about Walmart's Food Pantry Holiday Makeover. Gladden finished in 48th place and will receive \$20,000.00 from Walmart. As the pantry is in a rented building, the money will be spent on computers, shelving and a used pickup truck to deliver food to homebound residents.

This year's Christmas Ornament was the Gladden Window in the west transept. “The Friendly Visitor” depicts an aspect of charity - friendly, generous treatment and care of strangers and those in need. How fitting.

Dawn George, Justice and Mercy Commission



February Calendar of Church Events

Sunday, February 1

9 a.m. – Worship – Parish Hall
9 a.m. – Teen and Treble Choirs – Choir Room
10 a.m. – First Church Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
10 a.m. – Christian Education – Ed Wing, Rooms C/D
11 a.m. – Worship – Sanctuary
Noon – Fellowship Hour – Parish Hall
12:30 a.m. – Confirmation Class and Mentor Training – Education Wing Room C
2 p.m. – Roehm Memorial Service – Sanctuary

Monday, February 2

Noon – Care Ministry – Large Conference Room
6:30 p.m. – Church Vitality Group – Associate Minister's Office
7p.m. – Personnel Committee

Tuesday, February 3

12:15 p.m. – First Tuesdays Concert – Sanctuary
12:45 p.m. – Lunch – Parish Hall
2:30 p.m. – Worship Planning – Parish Family Room
5:30 p.m. – Sacred Earth – Large Conference Room
6:30 pm – Christian Education Committee – Education Wing Room D
7p.m. – Justice and Mercy – Large Conference Room

Wednesday, February 4

11 a.m. – Book Study – Parlor

Thursday, February 5

6:15 p.m. – First Church Ringers Rehearsal – Gallery
7:30 p.m. – First Church Choir Rehearsal – Parish Hall

Sunday, February 8

9 a.m. – Worship – Parish Hall
9 a.m. – Teen and Treble Choirs Rehearsal – Choir Room
10 a.m. – First Church Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
10 a.m. – Christian Education – Ed Wing, Rooms C / D
11 a.m. – Worship – Sanctuary
Noon – Fellowship Hour – Parish Hall
12:30 p.m. – Confirmation Class – Ed Wing Room C
6 p.m. – High School Youth – Parish Hall

Monday, February 9

9 a.m. – Good Samaritan Day
Noon – Care Ministry – Large Conference
7 p.m. – Budget and Finance – Large Conference Room
7 p.m. – Trustees – Parlor
7 p.m. – New Member Class – Associate Minister's Office

Tuesday, February 10

2 p.m. – Worship Planning – Parish Family Room
7 p.m. – Executive Committee – Parish Family Room

Wednesday, February 11

9:30 a.m. – Staff Meeting – Large Conference Room

Thursday, February 12

10: a.m – Thursday Fellowship – Parlor

Saturday, February 14

10 a.m. – First Church Quilters

Sunday, February 15

9 a.m. – Worship – Parish Hall
9 a.m. – Teen and Treble Choirs – Choir Room
10 a.m. – Christian Education – Ed Wing, Rooms C / D
11 a.m. – Worship – Sanctuary
Noon – Fellowship Hour – Parish Hall
6 p.m. – Middle and High School Youth – Parish Hall

Monday, February 16

Noon – Care Ministry – Large Conference Room
7p.m. – Personnel Committee – Parish Family Room

Tuesday, February 17

2 p.m. – Worship Planning – Parish Family Room
5:30 p.m. – Pancake Dinner – Parish Hall
7 p.m. – Church Council – Large Conference Room

Wednesday, February 18 – Ash Wednesday

11 a.m. – Book Study – Parlor
12 noon – Ash Wednesday Service – Sanctuary
7 p.m. – Gloucester Meeting – Parlor
7:30 p.m. – Ash Wednesday Service – Sanctuary

Thursday, February 19

6:15 p.m. – First Church Ringers Rehearsal – Gallery
7:30 p.m. – First Church Choir Rehearsal – Parish Hall

Saturday, February 21

8:30 a.m. – House and Grounds Committee – Parish Family Room

Sunday, February 22

9 a.m. – Worship – Parish Hall
9 a.m. – Teen and Treble Choirs Rehearsal – Choir Room
10 a.m. – First Church Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
10 a.m. – Christian Education – Ed Wing, Rooms C / D
11 a.m. – Worship – Sanctuary
Noon – Fellowship Hour – Parish Hall
12:15 p.m. – Confirmation Trip to Noor Islamic Cultural Center
5:30 p.m. – Pasta Supper, Silent Auction and Choir Cabaret – Parish Hall

Monday, February 23

Noon – Care Ministry – Large Conference
7 p.m. – Budget and Finance – Large Conference Room
7 p.m. – Deacons Meeting – Ed Wing, Room D

Tuesday, February 24

2 p.m. – Worship Planning – Parish Family Room

Wednesday, February 25

9:30 a.m. – Staff Meeting – Large Conference Room

Thursday, February 26

6:15 p.m. – First Church Ringers Rehearsal – Gallery
7:30 p.m. – First Church Choir Rehearsal – Parish Hall

Friday, February 27

4:30 p.m. – Middle and High School Youth Snow Tubing at Snow Trails – Meet at Costco parking Lot at Polaris

Saturday, February 28

9 a.m. – Cooking for Faith Mission – Kitchen
9 a.m. – Women's Retreat – Large Conference Room / Parlor

Member Birthdays in February

2/2 Nathan Bennett
Sophia Polo
2/3 Braden Baird
Devon Baird
2/4 Randy Hoffman
Grace Gelpi
Vanessa Gonzalez
2/5 Ann McIsaac
Anne Morganstern
Lynn Wallich
Debbie Yontz
Rachel Catus
2/6 Sheila Faryman
Abby Salak
2/7 Jane Carter
2/8 Jonah Ewing
2/9 Helen Cook
Tim Ahrens
Jim Griffin
Vic Jennette
Alyssia Palmer
2/10 Kennedy Thompson
2/11 Jazmyn Daines
2/12 Mark Leidheiser
2/13 Jason Brandt
2/14 Bob Kutschbach
Becky Magaw
Rachel Unkovic
Grace Glaros
2/15 Herb Goetz
Ellen Braverman
2/16 Peggy Alexander
Dick Ward
Tom Farquhar
2/17 Craig Clay
Tyler Reid
Rachel Henderson
2/18 Cindy Conn
2/19 Ron Cook
2/20 Michael Frost, Jr.
Dylan Hopcraft
2/21 Cathy Redenbarger
Joe Lane
2/22 Charisma Jones
2/23 Gleva Stephens
Annie-Rose Cooke
2/24 Lola Edwards
2/25 Mike Koscher
Joanna Stewart
Julia Myers
Betsy Braverman
2/26 Kopano Marumo
2/27 Kim Hopcraft
Dylan Collier
2/28 Connie Johnson
Melva Fisher
2/29 Tammy Alexander

Member Anniversaries in February

2/5 Kris and Richard Brant
2/14 Debbie Kelly and Larry Thorne
Debbie and Bob Arthur
2/16 Amy and Bill Wagner
Jacqueline and Matthew MacLaren
2/17 Anna and Mark Jensen
2/18 Sallie and Karl Danneberger
2/19 Cami Curren and Thom Smith
Liz and Jeff Vandervoort

February Fellowship Hour Schedule

February 1 Galatians
February 8 Haggai
February 15 Hosea
February 22 Jeremiah

February Acolyte Schedule

February 1 Alania Thompson Nina Zimmerman
February 8 Matty Provenzano Mia Provenzano
February 15 Chutney Anderson Eddie Anderson
February 22 Peter Spofforth Nick Boriin

February Offering Schedule

February 1 Mid Ohio Workers
February 8 Kaleidoscope
February 15 Deep Griha
February 22 Good Samaritan

February Sermons before Lent

February 8 – Fifth Sunday After Epiphany

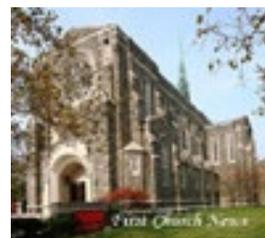
Sermon: “Why Preach? Why Listen”

Texts: Isaiah 40: 21-31; Psalm 147: 1-11; I Corinthians 9: 16-20c; Mark 1:29-39

February 15 – Transfiguration Sunday

Sermon: “Elijah, Moses, and Jesus: Thrice Blessed!”

Texts: 2 Kings 2: 1-12; Psalm 50: 1-6; 2 Corinthians 4: 3-6; Mark 9:2-9



FIRST CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Senior Minister	Timothy C. Ahrens, M. Div.
Associate Minister	Emily Krause Corzine, M. Div.
Minister of Music	Kevin Jones, M. M.
Director of Christian Education	Mark S. Williams, M. Ed.
Commissioned Minister for Social Justice	Tom Brownfield
Commissioned Minister for Spiritual Formation and Direction	Jacquelyn Dean
Nursery Staff	Rosemary Pawandiwa-Priore, Evin Wimberly, Sara Kapp, Simone Ellerson
Organist/Choirmaster Emeritus	G. Dene Barnard

DIACONATE

Senior Deacon	Tom Kiesel
Deacons	Kathryn Bamberger, Sandy Bennett, Kris Brant, Sue Cook, Jacquelyn Dean, Alec Dietz, Dean Hafey, Anne Hudson, Paul Leidheiser, Mary Lightbody, Jonathan Miller, Sue Salak, Hugh Schultz, Lynn Wallich

CHURCH STAFF

Business Manager	Sharon Leidheiser
Program Manager	Martha Worth
Building Manager	Thomas R. Luff
Office Manager	Amy Wagner
Custodians	William Lee, Lena Brown
Wedding Coordinators	Janet Axt, Tori Stucke

CHURCH OFFICERS

Moderator	Elaine Warren
Moderator-Elect	Brian Cave
Treasurer	Joe Baszynski
Assistant Treasurer	Cindy Conn
Secretary	Deana Armstrong
Assistant Secretary	Nancy Braverman

COMMISSIONERS

Administration	Kent Shimeall
Administration-Elect	Allison Palmer
Church Growth	Scott Jones
Church Growth-Elect	Kim Hopcraft
Education	Todd Jacobson
Education-Elect	Jennifer Okezie-Watts
House & Grounds	Gary Leidheiser
House & Ground-Elect	Charlie Weaver
Justice & Mercy	Alex Rodriguez
Justice & Mercy-Elect	Tracy Ross
Music, Arts, Heritage	Marti Baumer
Music, Arts, Heritage-Elect	Al Waddell
Church Vitality	Melissa Kulwicki
Church Vitality-Elect	Denise Vogt
Nominating Chair	Frank Cook
Trustees	Christopher Washington
Member-at-large	Matt Myers
Youth-at-large	Merry Roach
Senior Deacon	Tom Kiesel
Deacon Council Rep.	Lynn Wallich

TO:



**FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH**

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