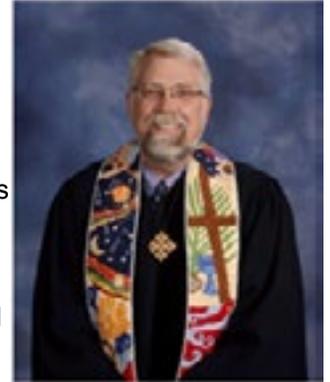




“Black Lives Matter”

By Rev. Tim Ahrens

#blacklivesmatter...We see this everywhere today. In the aftermath of a series of police violence against unarmed African-American boys, teens, and men, people are marching across the nation for Racial and Economic Justice. It is clear that the cry of “Black Lives Matter,” “I Can’t Breathe,” “Hands Up,” and more are calling America to moral accountability. We have to change the way black men are arrested and incarcerated in America. We have to make it safe to be Black and male in America. Moreover, we need to right the age-old wrongs of racism and racism’s ugly counterparts – social and economic injustice.



Race Matters in America. You can say the struggles between White and Black America are a thing of the past, but I don’t believe that for a moment. If they were a thing of the past, why do the words of the speech below resonate as clearly in this present moment? I have often said, “There is nothing ‘dreamy’ about Dr. King’s ‘I have a dream’ speech.” In fact, the speech is misnamed. It should be entitled, “Is the Bank of Justice Bankrupt?” or “An Unpaid Promissory Note.”

Dr. King was no dreamer. He was a strategic activist for nonviolence. He was a pastor committed to the cause of social and economic justice. He used the power of nonviolent civil disobedience to shine the light of justice upon the dreaded and evil injustices of his age. His model for engagement should guide the path of those seeking to change America today. But, in 52 years, the struggles are dreadfully similar. You and I have to be a part of righting this wrong.

As I did last year, I have included the entire text of a King sermon. This is his most famous sermon. But, other than the cadence of courage and the power of preaching which closed this sermon, how many of you have ever read the entire text of one of the most important speeches in American history?

On January 11 and 18, I will be joined by some African-American friends and together we will lead a two week discussion at 10 a.m. on Black Lives Matter and Race in America. I will take my lead from the young and bold activists who are leading the way right now. I invite you to come to the large conference room for this discussion during the education hour.

On January 11, former State Senator Ray Miller, who is also the Publisher of The Columbus African American News Journal will join me. Mr. Carter Stewart of the US Attorneys Office, Southern District of Ohio will be joining me on January 18. Artist, Ohio Student Organization Leader and Community Activist MarShawn McCarrel will be our speaker on Feb. 1.

On January 18th, I will preach on Jeremiah 31:31-34. My sermon is entitled, “A Movement to Change the World.”

In preparation for our time together, please read “I Have A Dream,” by The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Also, please go and see “Selma.” It opened in select theatres on Christmas Day and opens nationwide on January 9.

“I Have a Dream”

Delivered by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., August 28, 1963, Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C.

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we’ve come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

"I Have a Dream" ...

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead.

We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating: "For Whites Only." We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And some of you have come from areas where your quest -- quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

"I Have a Dream" ...

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."²

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing.

Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride,

From every mountainside, let freedom ring!

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that:

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

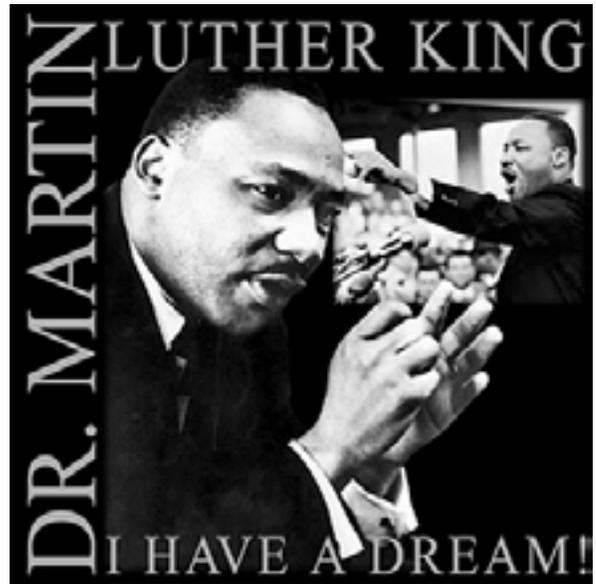
Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.

From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!



STEWARDSHIP 2015 – Getting Closer to our “Imagine More” Goal

By Rev. Tim Ahrens

Our “Imagine More” 2015 Stewardship Campaign Stands at 80% of goal! Thanks to the generosity and commitments of 198 households of faith, we have reached \$612,617.28.

Although we are ahead of last year’s numbers, we know that, with the costs of staff benefits increasing and simply the “cost of doing business,” we need at least 10-15% more income to present a balanced budget for 2015. In other words, we need every member to respond in love and thanksgiving for our church’s ministries and missions. We need all of us to step up and pledge for the coming year.

If you have not pledged for 2015, click here (<http://www.first-church.org/give.aspx>) and go to the website. Pledge right now. You can also pledge by calling Sharon Leidheiser – 614-228-1741, ext. 11 or emailing Sharon at Sleidheiser@first-church.org. Together we can “Imagine More” and grow forward in 2015. Thank you – everyone!

2015 Annual Congregational Meeting – January 25th – following 10 a.m. Worship

by Rev. Tim Ahrens

We will have ONE service of worship on January 26 at 10 a.m. This year we are blessed to welcome to our service the Columbus Gay Men’s Chorus Sacred Ensemble, “Illuminati.” Their powerful music will add richly to a special day in the life of church.

We will follow the 10 a.m. service with our 163rd Annual Congregational Meeting at 11 a.m. in the sanctuary. In addition to receiving reports from the Boards, Commissions, Committees, Church Council leadership and staff, we will also vote on the annual budget and the slate of nominees who have stepped up to serve in 2015. We will also give thanks to God for Rev. Dan Clark as his time as our Interim Associate Minister comes to an end and he moves back into the pews with his children.

Following the meeting, all are invited to Parish Hall for our Third Annual Chili Cook-off! Please mark your calendar and plan to attend our annual congregational meeting.

We are Congregationalists and this Congregational meeting is our way of being together and forming our life in community. It is what our forbearers called the “Congregational Way.” We hope everyone comes and enjoys the worship, fellowship, and organizational sharing and votes, and food and table fellowship.

Mark your calendars.... It is the same Sunday every year. If you don’t believe me, check out your Constitution. See you at 10, 11 and 12 on 1/25/15.

Sermon Titles for January 2015

January 4 – Christmas II

Preacher: Rev. Ahrens

Communion Meditation: “To Begin Again”

Texts: Psalm 147:12-20; Jeremiah 31:7-14; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:1-18

January 11 - The Baptism of Our Lord

Preacher: Rev. Ahrens

Baptismal Meditation: “Whose Baptism is This?”

Texts: Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29, Acts 19:1-7, Mark 1:4-11

January 18 – Second Sunday After Epiphany

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday

Preacher: Rev. Ahrens

Sermon Title – “A Movement to Change the World”

Texts: I Samuel 3:1-10, Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18, I Corinthians 6:12-20, John 1:43-51

January 25 – Third Sunday After Epiphany

Congregational Meeting Sunday – one service at 10am

Preacher: Rev. Clark

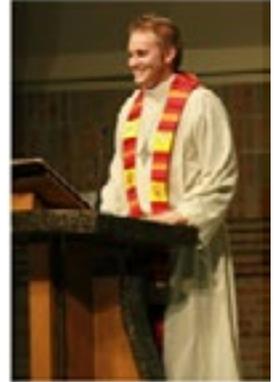
Sermon: “The Dust of a Rabbi”

Texts: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12, I Corinthians 7:29-31, Mark 1:14-20

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 x21. Let’s connect.

From Africa With Love: A Report on Rev. Dan’s Mission Trip to Ethiopia in November

By Rev. Dan Clark, Interim Associate Minister

Thirteen Americans – some medical professionals, all volunteers – boarded a 14 hour flight from Washington Dulles to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on November 12th. After the long flight comes a 12 hour drive, through the Lower Rift Valley, into the green mountains of southern Ethiopia. And then the road ends in a town called Chencha. The trip is finished on foot with a 3 hour hike, ascending 2,000 feet in elevation, to the simple village of Bora. Here 10,000 people live without electricity or running water. And, until Health Gives Hope began bringing medical teams in 2009 and constructed a clinic in 2011 and 2012, there was no access to healthcare.

Chief Meke had been praying for decades that his people would know hope, in his language, hidota. I know Chief Meke’s nephew, Israel Dejene, through a friend from my undergrad days studying music at Valparaiso University. That is the circuitous and fortuitous route that brings us to today. In the late Chief Meke’s words, prayers have been answered. He believed that healthcare would give hope.

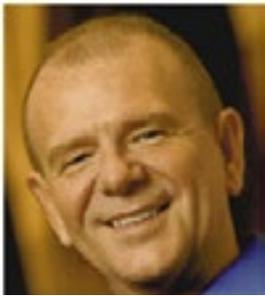
Much was accomplished by our team of 13 Americans and 5 Ethiopian hosts. Several hundred people received medical care in the village and in a local prison (we’ve been asked by the local government to help provide for the needs of the prisoners, as well, and we’re happy to help where we can). Additionally, our team used GPS mapping devices on Android phones and water testing kits to pin and process 15 local water sources, hand dug wells and natural springs. Some of these sources are problematic, and all of them dry up in certain times of the year. A next step is to facilitate a professionally-dug well. We’ll then consider a solar-powered windmill that could pump clean and safe water into a reservoir. And looking forward, we hope to provide dental and vision care. Tooth aches and head aches are everywhere. We are so blessed to have the access and resources we have here in the States. Many in the world are living with very little. So we continue to work and serve and pray and give to share with them real hope.

To keep up with this project, you can visit www.healthgiveshope.org or like Health Gives Hope on Facebook. Also, a video was recently finished from this latest trip. You can view it here: www.tinyurl.org/healthgiveshopevideo. Thank you for the encouragement and support that First Church has provided for Health Gives Hope and the people of Bora, Ethiopia. Godi Emu... Ahmesugenalew... Thank you!

Education

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

Adult Education Starts New Year!



The Adult Education classes on Sunday morning start the year with two new tracks that will entice many to attend. Bill Catus will lead the “Opening the Word” track with “The Book of Job”. The “Life and Faith” track will begin with a series of classes on “Loving the Least of These.” Jonathan Miller will lead us through an understanding of Loving our Neighbors with challenges. Rev. Tim Ahrens will then facilitate two classes on “Black Lives Matter.” He will be joined on January 11 by former State Senator Ray Miller, who is also the Publisher of The Columbus African American News Journal. Carter Stewart of the US Attorneys Office, Southern District of Ohio will be joining Rev. Tim on January 18. The Education Hour begins each Sunday at 10 a.m. on the first floor of the Education Wing.

Youth Groups Help With BOBS

Our middle and high school youth group members came bright and early on what for most was their first day of vacation to help wrap presents, stuff cards, cut celery and onions, pull bread and write messages of greetings for Bethlehem on Broad Street guests. Thank you, youth groups! What a blessing!



Spring Retreat Set for April 17-19

This year’s spring retreat will be Friday evening, April 25, through Sunday morning, April 17, at Pilgrim Hills camp and retreat center. It is located about an hour northeast of Columbus off Route 62 at Brinkhaven. Please mark your calendars and plan to bring your whole family or just yourself. Brochures and registration forms will be in the church office and on the website after March 10. Deadline for registration is April 10. We have space for 90 people – let’s fill it! See Mark S. Williams for more information.

Back Bay Mission Trip Agreements

Agreement to Participate forms for the Back Bay Mission Trip are now available in the church office and after each service in the Parish Hall. Brochures are also available with details about the trip. There is only room for 40 participants for this trip. Make plans now and get your name on the list. There is a separate form for youth and one for adults. The first deadline for deposit is January 11, 2015. We are asking a \$50 deposit for each participant. This cross-generational trip will be June 20-27, 2015. Please see Mark S. Williams for more details



Are You Covered?

Get answers to your questions and explore your options for health coverage with a trained, objective Navigator. Open enrollment is until February 15, 2015. First Church member Kathryn Bamberger is a licensed Navigator who can help you find coverage that fits your budget and meets your needs. This is a free service. Kathryn can be reached at 749-7262 or bambergerk@southeastinc.com.

The project described is part of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks Navigator Program and was supported by Funding Opportunity Number CA-NAV-14-002 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. The contents provided are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of HHS or any of its agencies.

From the Minister of Music

By Kevin Jones, Minister of Music

(kjones@first-church.org)

Choir News

Liturgical Appearance Schedules

Treble Choir

- Rehearsals Jan. 11, 18 at 9 a.m.; No rehearsals Jan. 4, Jan. 25

Teen Choir

- Rehearsals Jan. 11, 18 at 9 a.m.; No rehearsals Jan. 4, Jan. 25

First Church Ringers

- Rehearsals Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29; No rehearsal Jan. 1

First Church Choir

- Rehearsals Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29; Sing in Worship Jan. 11, 18, 25 (10 a.m. worship); No rehearsal Jan. 1

We do not sing in Worship on Jan. 4



First Church Music Department Welcomes Sandra Mathias

As of November 30, 2014, Dr. Sandra Mathias began working with the Treble Choir as their Interim Director. Dr. Mathias, or “Dr. M.” as she is known to our Choristers, is a graduate of SUNY - Fredonia (BS in Mus. Ed.); Ball State University (MA with Orff Concentration), The Ohio State University (Ph.D. in Mus. Ed.), and The Kodály Center of America (Kodály Certificate). Dr. Mathias is Professor Emerita from Capital University, where she served as Professor of Vocal Music Education and Director of The Kodály Institute at Capital for 29 years. She is also Director Emerita of the Columbus Children’s Choir, after serving as Founder/Artistic Director for 25 years.

Under her direction, the New World Singers of the Columbus Children’s Choir performed at the 2007 national conferences of the American Choral Directors’ Association (ACDA) and the Organization of American Kodály Educators (OAKE). She prepared the New World Singers to perform with the National Repertory Orchestra in Breckenridge, CO; the Chautauqua Symphony; and the Columbus Symphony Orchestra (CSO). In 2004, 2008, and 2012, the choir toured in Europe. In 2010, they received first place in Youth Division of The American Prize. In December 2011, they sang at the White House. Dr. Mathias is the recipient of the Kodály Institute of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music - Intezetért Award; the CSO Community Music Educator of the Year; the Southside Settlement Arts Freedom Award; and Outstanding Educator Award from Organization of American Kodály Educators (OAKE). She has served as guest conductor for the Georgia All-State Middle School Treble Chorus the OAKE National Children’s Choir, the NYACDA Children’s Honor Chorus, and several festivals throughout the mid-west.

Sandy brings her incredible expertise and experience to the benefit of the Treble Choristers and to us all. Welcome, Sandy!



Music News

Special Twelfth Night Concerts

The Early Interval is returning to Britain for its annual celebration of Twelfth Night. The program will be presented in the neo-gothic splendor of First Congregational Church in downtown Columbus.

A British Twelfth Night Celebration will feature music from the 12th through 17th centuries from Great Britain. Among the selections will be medieval carols; the music of William Byrd; music for a consort of viols by John Dowland and other composers; music from courtly masques; music for two recorders and continuo; and lively English country dances. The Early Interval will perform vocally and on recorders, bass dulcian, crumhorns, medieval and Renaissance harps, violas da gamba, medieval lute, theorbo, Renaissance and Baroque guitars, rebec, vielle, violin and pipe and tabor.



The members of The Early Interval are Ron Cook, director, Jim Bates, Janice Cook, Sean Ferguson, Lyz Liddell and Tamara Seckel. The Early Interval will be joined for this concert by bass viol player Matthew Utt.

Single tickets are \$27 (regular price), \$22 (seniors ages 62+) and \$12 (students). Order online through www.earlymusicincolumbus.org or call 614-861-4569. Tickets ordered by Dec. 26 will be mailed to you. Tickets purchased after Dec. 26 will be held at the door and may be picked up 75 minutes prior to concert time. Tickets may also be purchased at the door the evening/afternoon of the concert or in advance by calling the CAPA ticket office (614-861-4569) or Ticketmaster (800-745-3000).

Support First Church Choir's Mission to Gloucester, UK

July 31 – August 10, 2015, the First Church Choir will embark on a Pilgrimage to Gloucester Cathedral in Gloucester, UK. This is a significant milestone for First Church Choir. Having been selected to be the Choir-In-Residence at the cathedral is a tremendous honor and responsibility. Our preparations are ongoing and fundraising is going well. Thank you for all of your support. As we get closer to departure day, here's one way you can help us reach our goals:

Selling or buying a home or know someone who is?

- Refer a friend, family member or neighbor to one of our member realtors, Joyce Canfield, Wayne Henry, Bob Kutschbach or Al Waddell and they'll donate a portion of their commission to the choir!! See a choir member or pick up detailed information in the church office.

Save the Date for First Tuesdays

Organist G. Dene Barnard presents a recital on Tuesday, February 3rd, at 12:15 p.m.

Please check the concerts website, www.concertsatfirstchurch, for more information.

Church News

Jack Davis: A Steward of God

by Joanne Hachtel, Trinity Mission Board,

It was with much sadness that I read about the death of Jack Davis on December 1. Jack, a former member of Trinity, was a wonderful steward of God who put his faith into action in many ways.

His smile and greeting were big. His vision was even bigger. Jack's faith extended beyond the local church and into our denomination and the ecumenical community. He served on the Department for Church and Ministry of the Central Southeast Ohio Association (UCC), the Columbus Metropolitan Area Church Board, and the Ohio Council of Churches.

The generous and caring spirits of both Jack and Trinity's late Peggy Hollenbeck prompted me to join the Mission Board. Several years ago, Trinity held cookouts at Kroger on Morse Road. These cookouts would not have been possible without Jack. He got to Kroger early and fired up the grill. He always came with ideas on how to improve next year's cookout – from adding bratwurst to hot sauce. We averaged about \$600 a cookout.

At Trinity, Jack had a leadership position on the Consistory. On the Mission Board, Jack helped build houses through Trinity's involvement with Habitat for Humanity and he helped families through Trinity's ministry to homeless persons. He supported the UCC's special mission offerings and our Penny Pouch child. Jack was a mentor to young people about to be confirmed.

Four ministers paid tribute to Jack and Kay at a Service of Thanksgiving on December 9 at First Congregational Church UCC in Columbus. Participating were Rev. Henry L. Johnson III, Union Grove Church, where Jack's wife, Kay, is a member. Also participating were: Rev. Ronald Botts, Pastor, Highlands Presbyterian Church and a former minister at Trinity; Rev. Roger Miller, Emeritus Association Minister, Central Southeast Association, Ohio Conference; and the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister, First Congregational Church, where Jack was a member.

Rev. Botts included Jack among Christians who "rub shoulders with people from diverse backgrounds and are interested in seeing how others see the world. They seek to be bridge builders and desire to be in harmony with people even when they can't be in full agreement. I valued Jack's counsel."

"Jack cut through to what mattered," said Rev. Ahrens. "He was beloved by many people and people wanted to be around him. He has enriched our denomination."

In questioning potential ministerial candidates in the Department for Church and Ministry, Jack's questions "were rooted in the real world," said Rev. Miller. "He was a pastor to pastors and a pillar of the UCC."

Save the Date...

Thursday Fellowship – Thursday, January 8 at 10:00 in the Parlor: Discussing members' favorite books



Missing Something? Please check the Lost and Found drawer in the church office.

Church News. . . .

FIRST CHURCH JOYS AND CONCERNS

MEMBERS: Martha Loy; Betsy Zahn; Olivia Rodriguez; Nancy Burba; Peggy Alexander; Greg Halbe; Mary Lightbody; Grace Glaros; Bernie Martin; Van Barndt; Gerhard Wolff; Ray Pendell; Ann McIsaac; Wib Smith; Amos White; Paul Fishel; Essie Cannon; and for families and friends who continue to mourn the loss of loved ones.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY: the family of Amy Longar, friend of Betsy Hubbard; the family of Bill Lewis, friend of Pauline and Earl Fritz; Mike Fields, brother of Duan Cannon; Martha Fullemann's mother; Dorothy Everett, mother of Gayle Henderson; Heidi Marra, friend of Leslie Fulford; Kathryn Sosna, sister of Lucille Kropp; Kenny Family, friends of Cindy Deliman; Emma Darling, niece of Mary Anne Jacobson; Howard Kreider, father of Mary Anne Jacobson; Rev. Floyd Starr; Jack, student of Sallie Danneberger; Karl Danneberger's mother, Evelyn; Chessie Dellenbach's husband, Louie; Jenny Lukens; Adam, friend of Betsy Zahn's granddaughter; Dottie Johnson, aunt of Tori Stucke; Heather Smith, friend of Amy Wagner; Cheryl Everts, friend of Betty Johnson; Steve Price, friend of Leslie Huntington; and all those suffering from the effects of mental illness; prayers for #blacklivesmatter protesters around the nation; and prayers for health, a better attitude in life, and peace.

Your prayers will remain in the Parish News for three consecutive Sundays unless we are asked to remove or keep them. Please keep us informed about those for whom you have requested prayers. Thank you.

Recent Celebration Gifts to First Church

By Bill Johannes and Jane Werum

- Given to the Legacy Fund and the Stained Glass Preservation Fund by Jane Werum
- Given to the Stewardship Continuity Fund and the Church Acquisition, Expansion and Development Endowment Fund by Becky and Sheldon Taft
- Given to the Jackie Owen Memorial Music Fund in celebration of the life of Jackie Owen by Col. William Owen.
- Given to the Remembrance Fund in celebration of the lives of Marjorie Smith by Joan Morris and Georgia Swinger by Walter Littrell, James and Bette Starner, Pat Liebchen, and Michael Swinger

Fellowship Hour Schedule

January 4	Daniel
January 11	Deuteronomy
January 18	Ephesians
January 25	Lunch after Annual Meeting

January Acolyte Schedule

January 4	Nina Zimmerman	Alaina Thompson
January 11	Chutney Anderson	Eddie Anderson
January 18	Allysa Batchelor	Courtney Batchelor
January 25	Cassidy Hopcraft	Dylan Hopcraft

January Offering Schedule

January 4	Back Bay Mission Trip
January 11	Church World Services - Clean Water
January 18	BREAD



FELLOWSHIP TEAM SCHEDULE

Below is listed the 2015 schedule for Fellowship Hour Teams. Please mark your calendars. The dates in bold type are Sundays with meals following special worship services and/or congregational meetings. The schedule will be on the Church website www.first-church.org. and monthly listings will be in the newsletter and Parish News.

2015 FELLOWSHIP HOUR SCHEDULE	
DATE	FELLOWSHIP TEAM
Jan. 4, June 14, Nov. 15	Daniel
Jan. 11, June 21, Nov. 22	Deuteronomy
Jan. 18, June 28, Nov. 29	Ephesians
Jan. 25	Lunch after ANNUAL MEETING
Feb. 1, July 5, Dec 6	Galatians
Feb. 8, July 12, Dec. 13	Haggai
Feb. 15, July 19, Dec. 20	Hosea
Feb. 22, July 26, Dec. 27	Jeremiah
March 1, Aug. 2	Kings
March 8, Aug. 9	Leviticus
March 15, Aug. 16	Micah
March 22, Aug. 23	Numbers
March 29, Aug. 30	Proverbs
April 5	EASTER BRUNCH 10 A.M.
April 12, Sept. 6	Psalms
April 19, Sept. 13	Romans
April 26, Sept. 20	Ruth
September 27	LEGACY SUNDAY LUNCH
May 3, Oct. 4	Samuel
May 10, Oct. 11	Zechariah
May 17, Oct. 18	Acts
May 24, Oct. 25	Amos
May 31, Nov. 1	Colossians
June 7, Nov. 8	Corinthians



Children portraying the Christmas Story during the 3:00 Christmas Eve Service

January Calendar of Church Events

Thursday, January 1

All Day – Office Closed

Sunday, January 4

9 a.m. – Worship – Parish Hall
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

Monday, January 5

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

Tuesday, January 6

2 p.m. – Worship Planning – Parish Family Room
6:30 pm – Christian Education Committee – Education Wing Room D

Wednesday, January 7

11 a.m. – Book Study – Parlor
6 p.m. – Music Committee – Parlor

Thursday, January 8

10: a.m – Thursday Fellowship – Parlor
6:15 p.m. – First Church Ringers Rehearsal – Gallery
7:30 p.m. – First Church Choir Rehearsal – Parish Hall

Friday, January 9

5:30 p.m. – Confirmation Field Trip to Tifereth Israel

Saturday, January 10

10 a.m. – First Church Quilters 3 pm – Large Conference Room

Sunday, January 11

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
Noon – Executive Committee – Parish Family Room
6:00 p.m. – Middle and High School Youth – Parish Hall

Monday, January 12

9 a.m. – Good Samaritan Day
Noon – Care Ministry – Large Conference
Noon – BREAD Meeting – Parish Family Room
7 p.m. – Budget and Finance – Large Conference Room
7 p.m. – Trustees – Large Conference Room
7 p.m. – Personnel – Parish Family Room

Tuesday, January 13

2 p.m. – Worship Planning – Parish Family Room
7 p.m. – Church Council – Large Conference Room

Wednesday, January 14

11 a.m. – Staff Planning for Lent – Parish Family Room

Thursday, January 15

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

Saturday, January 17

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

Sunday, January 18

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
10 a.m. – Confirmation Class Trip to St. Thomas the Apostle
11 a.m. – Worship – Sanctuary
Noon – Fellowship Hour – Parish Hall

Monday, January 19

All Day – Office Closed (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day)

Tuesday, January 20

2 p.m. – Worship Planning – Parish Family Room
7 p.m. – Deacons Meeting – Large Conference Room

Wednesday, January 21

11 a.m. – Book Study – Parlor
7 p.m. – Gloucester Meeting – Parlor

Thursday, January 22

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

Sunday, January 25

9 a.m. – First Church Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
10 a.m. – Worship – Sanctuary
11 a.m. – Annual Meeting – Parish Hall
11 a.m. – Chili Cookoff – Parish Hall
6:00 p.m. – Middle and High School Youth – Parish Hall

Monday, January 26

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

Tuesday, January 27

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

Thursday, January 29

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

Member Birthdays in January

1/1 Priscilla Mondiek
1/2 Amos White
Gerry Worth
Laurie Maynell
1/3 Rick Welch
Jonah Knueve
1/4 Sarah Giffen
Jorge Polo
William Kientz II
Mark Stephen
Matt Allen
Jordan Knerr
James Knerr II
Quinn Leidheiser
1/5 James Woodard
Tom Hadley II
Lay Ke
1/6 Taimur Chaudhri
Emily Cooke
1/7 Harry Guynn
Gary Gray
1/8 Brad Keely
Michael Bishop
Greta Rosenberger
1/9 Carl Gelfius
1/11 Ray Pendell
Roger Sankey
1/12 Linda Mumford
Jack Jensen
1/13 Jim Fewlass
Eddie Fleurant
Lloyd Allen
Abby Cave
Kendra Worley
1/14 Katie Waller
Emily Bennett
1/15 Thom Smith
1/16 Pam Kallner
Dee Sturgill
Lisa Warrick
Phil Atkins
William Farquhar
Margaret Myers
1/17 Alyssa Batchelor
Caroline Zeiger
1/19 Jordan Cole
Cameron Wade
1/20 John Deliman
Yan Ke
Mike Henderson
Catherine Baird
1/22 Lena Brown
Sebby Kulwicki
1/24 Joyce Ward
Sarah Lange
Kevin Butler
Benjamin Hunter

1/25 Aryn Mason
Jack Koscher
Chase Washington
1/26 Gunter Garbe
Julie Stewart
1/27 Janet Younger
Tanya Miller
1/28 Teresa Polo
Alec Deitz
Katie Kutschbach
1/29 Jane Ward
Amy Fulton
Heather Ward
1/31 Hamish Baird
Laura Collins

Member Anniversaries in January

1/5 Malina Gnanatheeban and Pavan Peter
1/6 David and Deena Bowers
1/16 James and Carol Woodard



*Otto Edwards, our Security Officer,
playing Santa*

FIRST CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Senior Minister	Timothy C. Ahrens, M. Div.
Interim Associate Minister	Daniel J. Clark, M. A.
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	Christine Farquhar
Deacons	Kathryn Bamberger, G. Dene Barnard, Craig Clay, Sue Cook, Jacquelyn Dean, Anne Hudson, Tom Kiesel, Paul Leidheiser, Mary Lightbody, John Matchett, Jonathan Miller, Matt Myers, Sue Salak, Lynn Wallich

CHURCH STAFF

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

CHURCH OFFICERS

Moderator	Frank Cook
Moderator-Elect	Elaine Warren
Treasurer	David Holt
Assistant Treasurer	Joe Baszynski
Secretary	Melissa Prendergast
Assistant Secretary	Deana Armstrong

COMMISSIONERS

Administration	Jim Griffin
Administration-Elect	Kent Shimeall
Church Growth	Catherine Cunningham
Church Growth-Elect	Scott Jones
Education	Julia Myers
Education-Elect	Todd Jacobson
House & Grounds	Gary Leidheiser
Justice & Mercy	Matt Allen
Music, Arts, Heritage	Kevin Cubick
Music, Arts, Heritage-Elect	Marti Baumer
Church Vitality	Alec Deitz
Church Vitality-Elect	Melissa Kulwicki
Nominating Chair	Sarah Reed
Trustees	Christopher Washington, Chair
Member-at-large	Hugh Schultz
Youth-at-large	Cameron Wade
Senior Deacon	Christine Farquhar
Deacon Council Rep.	John Matchett

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