



“Jobs” is the Top Issue As The Nehemiah Action Assembly Meets Monday, May 9

By The Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens

On Monday Night, May 9, I invite you to join me and 3,500 people from 54 congregations of the BREAD Organization as we gather at The Celeste Center, 717 E. 17th Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43211 on the State of Ohio Fairgrounds to lift our voices for social justice.

The First Congregational UCC BREAD team has commitments from 70 people to join in this exciting assembly. Our goal for turn-out is 164. We established this goal because we have been doing justice in the heart of the capital city for 164 years. We need EVERYONE WHO READS THIS to come if we are to reach our goal. Please bring your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and children. There is child care for those four years or younger.

For twenty years, the BREAD Organization in Columbus, Ohio has been creating and telling turnaround tales for justice. BREAD stands for Building Responsibility Equality And Dignity and has 54 Jewish, Christian, and Muslim congregations doing the work of Justice. First Church has been a part of BREAD for 16 years. We joined BREAD through a unanimous congregational vote in January 2000. Through listening to one tales of what “wakes them in the middle of the night,” then selecting an issue for research, doing the research for justice-action and taking action, BREAD has engaged many issues of injustice. BREAD has addressed issues of health care injustice (caring for those who have no health care at all – before Obama Care was initiated), transportation injustice (like getting people from places of high poverty to places where jobs are found through COTA and public transportation), education injustice (like low reading scores or high rates of truancy in the Columbus City Schools), lack of quality identification for Hispanics who are often treated unjustly for “being Brown”, which is something that the 20,000+ African-American BREAD members can identify with, having been framed for hundreds of years for the crime of “being Black” in America. And now, BREAD is working on creating better job opportunities for those in under-served neighborhoods in Columbus. All of us in BREAD want to be part of a new turnaround tale.

In 2016, the members of the BREAD congregations have chosen a new issue – **Jobs**. We will unveil our action plan for our new issue on May 9. Through our research, BREAD has found that Columbus is a tale of two cities. There are privileged neighborhoods and constituencies that thrive here while other neighborhoods and people are considered throwaways. For example, Linden and the Hilltop have unemployment rates of over 15% and poverty rates over 40%, compared to the overall unemployment rate of 4.5% for Central Ohio. Everyone knows these conditions didn’t suddenly appear. These conditions came about through decades of decisions that marginalized neighborhoods as they declined, leaving residents with little opportunity or hope.

In our tale of two cities, a recent study by Toronto’s Martin Prosperity Institute ranks Columbus as the second most **economically** segregated metro areas in the United States of America – right behind Seattle, Washington. We have the second most segregated city in which pockets of extreme wealth and extreme poverty can be found. Poverty is high in our city even among those who are employed – a condition in which too many people are working too many jobs just to scrape by. This is especially true for people with any kind of criminal background who struggle to find employers who will hire them. 31,000 people returning from jail in Franklin County each year struggle to find any employers who will hire them.

During the research on jobs, one of our community’s leaders said of Linden and the Hilltop, “These neighborhoods are too far gone” to save. He said, “These places are so bad and people are so hopeless that it would take more resources than we have the willpower to invest to turnaround these places.” They are “too far gone?” When I heard these words, I was angry. How about you?

Who decides when someone is “too far gone” to save? Who decides when a community is “too far gone to save?” Since when did God make someone else God? Since when did the label “too far gone” get stamped on our city and the neighborhoods and the people in our city?

I believe all our people and all our neighborhoods are worth saving. Where there is a will, there is a way. The east side of Cleveland, Ohio provides a model. Something miraculous is happening in Cleveland.



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The Democracy Collaborative, in partnership with the Cleveland Foundation, the Ohio Employee Ownership Center, the City of Cleveland, and the City's major hospitals and universities, is helping to implement a new model of large-scale, worker-owned, and community-benefiting businesses. The Evergreen Cooperative Initiative is beginning to build serious momentum in one of the city's most dramatically impacted by the nation's decaying economy.

With the Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland State University, and Case Western University serving as Anchor Institutions, worker-owned businesses have risen from the decay and dust of Cleveland's east side. Solar-power is being harnessed. Worker-owned cleaning businesses have risen in which the laundry of the Clinic is all being washed, dried, and returned for use through neighborhood businesses – owned and operated by neighborhood people. Hundreds of good paying jobs have been established because Cleveland's Business Community, the Cleveland Foundation, the City of Cleveland and its people have come together to forge a different solution to the problem of urban flight, blight, and fright.

In BREAD, a growing number of us believe that we can create a model just like this in Linden, the Hilltop, Franklinton, the South Side and more. It takes the Will of God and the Will of People working together to create 21st Century turnaround tales. Would you like to join me in this effort? Would you like to be among the thousands who proclaim "our people and our neighborhoods are NOT too far gone to save." We believe in transformation. We believe in social salvation – not just saving a soul. We believe in justice turnaround tales. We believe in new tale – a tale of ONE city – ONE Columbus – not a tale of two cities.

If you would like to join me and be a part of the 164+ First Church members and the thousands of BREAD members as we all come together Monday night, May 9 to the Celeste Center, at the Ohio State Fairgrounds. It will be a great night for justice and yet another turnaround tale will be written, told and acted upon. We will change the script through the power of God and the power of God's people.

For those who wonder, BREAD will continue to tackle Mental Health Issues, Welcome Columbus (our initiative responding to discrimination against immigrants) and restorative justice for juvenile criminals at this critical meeting.

Registration begins at 6:15 p.m. If you need a ride, let us know by calling the church office – 614-228-1741, ext. 10 – Amy Wagner. You can also go directly to the meeting. Parking is free – but pick up a pass to gain easiest access. Email me with any questions at tahrens@first-church.org.

Sermon Titles for May

May 1 – Sixth Sunday of Easter

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Ahrens

Sermon: "Behold, A New Columbus"

Texts: Acts 16:9-15; Revelation 21:10, 22-22.5; John 14:23-29

May 8 – Seventh Sunday of Easter

Preacher: Rev. Corzine

Sermon: "Come, Lord Jesus"

Texts: Acts 16:16-34; John 17:20-26

May 15 – Pentecost Sunday

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Ahrens

Sermon: "Spirit"

Texts: Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104: 24-34, 35b; Roman 8:14-17; John 14:8-17

May 22 – Trinity Sunday

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Ahrens

Sermon: "Hope"

Texts: Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31; Psalm 8; Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15

May 29 – Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Preacher: Rev. Corzine

Sermon: "An Unexpected Faith"

Texts: 1 Kings 18:20-21, (22-29), 30-39; Psalm 96; Galatians 1:1-12; Luke 7:1-10



Generosity Speaks

By The Rev. Emily Corzine

Thank you for your support and encouragement during this time as our family grieves the loss of our nephew, Holden. Your thoughts, prayers and cards have been appreciated and coveted.

I have been thinking a lot about generosity. Thank you for the opportunity to engage in continuing education in a way that expands my understanding and skill sets along the landscape of generosity. I returned from a course on Religious Fundraising last month and have continued think of the ways that individuals and communities become generous.



Generosity is a virtue and practice. As a habit of the heart generosity has to do with both our being and our behaving. In Hebrew Scriptures, hesed or kindness, is a personal virtue or act. Originally the word meant loyalty to God and one's neighbor; it has come to mean "what one does in faithfulness to God and one's neighbor, namely, acts of love, kindness and care. In the Christian Scriptures, generosity is a word used to describe the character of God: God is "kind" and "generous" in the way God relates to humans. Christians in turn, are to mirror this divine virtue in the way they relate to other people.

"Generosity is grounded in a profound understanding that we all are in this together...It is only in fruitful alliances with others that we can do great things."
~David Henan and Warren Bennis

There is a social justice component to Generosity. In Hebrew, Tzedakkah or (generosity), is a social practice linking giving to justice whereby the pursuit of justice becomes something one does: "Justice, justice shall you pursue" (Deut.16:20). In Christianity, generous people "spend freely on good projects" because they have compassion for the world in which they live. In Islam, zakat (charity as purity) is one of the five Islamic pillars of faith whereby virtue of "goodness" becomes the practice of "doing good." Zakat is a moral imperative and the obligatory payment of 2.5% to the poor. Muslims believe that wealth is given by God and to be used in service to God.

Chris Smith a professor at Notre Dame has spent time researching generosity. In his work called The Generosity Project, he writes, "Generosity is the virtue of giving good things to others freely and abundantly. It is a learned character trait that involved attitude and action entailing both the inclination and actual practice of giving liberally. It is not a haphazard behavior but a basic orientation to life. What generosity gives can vary: money, time, attention, aid, encouragement, and more but it always intends to enhance the true well-being of the receiver." (Chris Smith, (2013), "The Generosity Project")

Generosity doesn't just happen. It is the work of all of us. We become generous people because of our experience in a community of participation, an experience of generosity at an early age, or a life experience. At some point, we may have had generosity modeled for us.

I hope that I live into this way of generous living. I hope you do too. I hope that we together can begin a conversation about our own generous living and generous lives. So I'll share another quote and offer an invitation to share with me an experience of generosity in your own life. Share with me your story.





Ministry of Care

By The Rev. Emily Corzine

The First Church Care Ministry continues to evolve and meet the needs of our congregation members and families in our care. Life happens. Life events happen. Generous members have come along side others during major life events (births, deaths, major surgeries, ongoing treatments) to provide support in many ways, such as:

- Prepare and deliver a meal for a family who recently had a new baby.
- Prepare and deliver a meal for a spouse who has lost a loved one.
- Deliver flowers to homebound members on a Sunday following worship.
- Celebrate communion with another church member at home.
- Provide transportation to and from a church event.
- Pray for individuals.
- Send a card of support and care.

How can you share your generous and caring spirit with others? Could you provide a meal or transportation for someone in need? We will connect you with a family who could use a meal, or could use a ride, or would appreciate flowers on a Sunday.

The commitment is minimal. The connection is great. The ministry of care involves us all.

If you can help in anyway for this ministry of food or transportation and care, please call Amy Wagner at 614-228-1741, ext. 10 or email Amy in the church office (awagner@first-church.org) and we'll add you to the circle of caring ministry happening here at First Church.

LINDA K. SLOCUM AND LETTING KIDS SUCCEED



By Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens

Being in the presence of Ms. Linda Kae Slocum is inspiring. She has a vision for a better world and it begins with the children in her summer program called "Letting Kids Succeed" or LKS

for short. This is a program for African-American children and teens in the heart of the city. LKS and Linda's inspiring leadership has blessed our church for the past twelve years. With over 150 children each summer, I have now seen hundreds of lives transformed through LKS. I encourage all school age children who have yet to establish their summer program plans for their children or grandchildren to check out Letting Kids Succeed. To sign-up soon call 614-506-0080.

Recently I asked Linda some questions about LKS. Here is what the founder and director of Letting Kids Succeed had to say.

Tim: What inspired you to being Letting Kids Succeed?

Linda: On November 2, 2004 I arrived at work and was given a letter that said "Your services are no longer needed." That was the beginning of Letting Kids Succeed. Out of my desire to help children was the driving force behind LKS. I wanted to give children in the community a quality program.

Tim: What need did you see in our community to found LKS?

Linda: The need that I saw in the community was that our children were academically behind and I felt that I needed to try to help out some type of way. I also saw that student coming out of college didn't have all the skills they needed to teach our children. So now during the summer months I hire college students in the field of education to allow them to obtain experience. The campers are able to have future educator teach them during summer and it's a win win situation for everyone. The college students are so full of new ideals and can make the learning process fun for the camper during summer months. This process has allowed our campers to go back to school in the fall with higher confidence and being prepared for the new school year. It really boils down to building better students and training future educators.

Tim: What are the foundational principles and values you are teaching in LKS?

Linda: Making sure the children know they are the best of the best always doing their best. When you respect yourself and others and stay focus you can accomplish your dreams. Because when you dare to dream you dare to make a difference in your life.

Tim: Linda, could you give me two or three success stories of your program?

Linda: My very first success story would be both of my daughters who came to work for me. They were there each and every day from the start of the day to the end of the day. There would be times when I would be at the church from 6:30am until the last person left the church. I say to them it must be hard being my daughters because I give out so much to all the children. I



Photo By LettingKidsSucceed.com

am always surrounded by the children giving me hugs and saying Ms. Linda I love you. When I'm at work when my daughters say mom I don't even hear them but if they say Ms. Linda I always respond, "yes sweetie what do you need?" It has become a family joke now just call her Ms. Linda. I am very proud of both of my girls they both have their master's degree and they are both administrators. So I say to God be the Glory.

There is a young man name DJ who walked away from camp as a teenager and was upset because I had boundaries and he didn't want to stay within the guide lines. About 4 years later I was sitting in my office and he walks up the stairs at the church and walks into my office and gave the biggest huge. We began to talk about things that he had done and how he wanted to change his ways. He then reached out to a few more of the kids that were at camp when he was younger (they were all 4th graders together). A few days later they all showed up and we had a great time talking and reminiscing about their old LKS days at the church. Within weeks these young people were leaving for college. It was just like yesterday they were all just 4th graders at camp. Since then DJ has come back every summer to visit and talk with the children and told them you need to listen to Ms. Linda (that put the biggest smile on my face) that's when you know you are going gods work.

There was a young man name Cedric who I hired when he was in the 8th grade. I would always tell the staff you never know who is watching you. Once Cedric came home for the summer after completed his first year at college he had an interview. After the interview he came straight to the church to tell me that he had gotten the job. The person that interviewed him was an LKS parent. This parent had seen his work ethic at the camp and he was given the job. He came to say thanks Ms. Linda you are right we never know who is watching. This past summer on his way to work he stopped past the church to say hello and how he is working for an accounting firm downtown.

Tim: Where have you found resources in the community to launch and sustain this program? Another words, what corporations or organizations give financial support or other

kinds of resources support? Let's name them.

Linda: The program was started with zero dollars. For years we only have depended on the payment from the parents to make the program run. There was one time I wrote a Grant and received money for FCJFS. I have received money once from Frist Congregational Church. I have an aunt that has made donations. We are now accredited with ACA so we can now accept Title XX funds. There is also an organization called CPO housing and they pay for their children that live within their housing to attend camp free. This past summer we had the wonderful opportunity to work with CSC.

Tim: Now in your 12th summer of doing this, what keeps you coming back?

Linda: What keeps me coming back is the ability to feel the learning gap for our children during the summer months. We are also able to hire LKS campers in the summer once they become high school freshman. I also get a joy of all of the past campers and staff that come by the church every summer just to check in and say hi. Each year I am able to see the fruit of what God has given me to do. There has not been one summer when the past campers or staff have not stopped and given a helping hand or just talked about what camp meant to them.

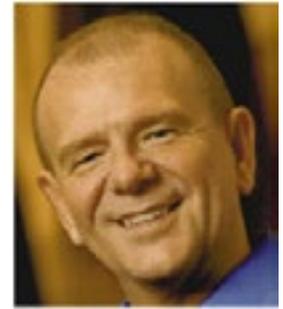
Tim: Why do you call the program Letting Kids Succeed? Why the use of the word letting?

Linda: My name is Linda Kae Slocum and I had been doing programing around the city of Columbus and people knew me so I needed something that connected to me. While I was sitting at a meeting I just wrote me initials down on paper and the words just came Letting Kids Succeed. The word letting means to me allowing kids to succeed in any way that works for them. With letting there are no boundaries that would stop them from succeeding.

Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens is the Senior Minister of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in downtown Columbus. A church known for its witness to social justice since its birth as an abolitionist congregation in 1852. Rev. Ahrens is the fifth consecutive senior minister from Yale Divinity School and is a lifelong member of the United Church of Christ.

Education

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



Teacher/Connections Breakfast May 1

The Christian Education Department will host a Teacher and Worship Connections appreciation breakfast on Sunday, May 1, in the Children's Library. All teachers and Worship Connection leaders will be recognized in both services that day.



Calling All Graduates!

If you or a family member is graduating from high school or college this year, send us some information including the person's name, the school the person is graduating from, the degree received, and possible future plans. We will be recognizing our graduates on Sunday, June 5. Send the information to awagner@first-church.org. You also may include a photo (electronic image only).

Flower/Vegetable for Sale on May 15!

Missed the Flower and Vegetable Sale? NO PROBLEM!

Since we must order by flats, we will have many single and 3 pak plants available for sale on May 15. Listed below are the items and sale price. Contact Mark Williams (mwilliams@first-church.org) if you want to pre-order the extra plants available.

Vegetables

Cucumbers

- Burpee Hybrid – 11 (3-pak) \$3.00
- Bush Pickle – 10 (3-pak) \$3.00
- Bush Crop – 11 (3-pak) \$3.00

Eggplant

- Black Beauty – 7 (3-pak) \$3.00

Peppers

- Gypsy – 11 (3-pak) \$3.00
- Hungarian Wax – 7 (3-pak) \$3.00
- Jalapeno – 8 (3-pak) \$3.00
- Pimento – 11 (3-pak) \$3.00
- Sweet Banana – 10 (3-pak) \$3.00
- Sweet cherry – 10 (3-pak) \$3.00

Squash

- Zucchini – 7 (3-pak) \$3.00
- Butternut – 10 (3-pak) \$3.00

Tomatoes

- Beef Stack – 8 (3-pak) \$3.00
- Better Boy – 11 (3-pak) \$3.00
- Big Boy – 11 (3-pak) \$3.00
- Lemon Boy – 10 (3-pak) \$3.00
- Early Girl – 5 (3-pak) \$3.00

Tomatoes 4 ½ Pots

- Early Girl – 7 @ \$2.00 ea.
- Big Beef – 11-@ \$2.00 ea.
- Big Boy – 11 @ \$2.00 ea.
- Grape Cherry – 4 @ \$2.00 ea.

Flowers

Zonal Geraniums – 4 ½ pots

- Salmon – 10 @ \$3.00 ea.
- Violet – 10 @ \$3.00 ea.

Bedding Geraniums – 3 pak

- Pink – 10 paks @ \$2.00 ea.

4 ½ Potted Plants

- Vinca Vine – 10 @ \$2.50 ea.
- Sprengeri – 10 @ \$2.50 ea.
- Spikes – 9 @ \$2.50 ea.

Update on Laundry Love Mission

The Children and Youth of First Church took on the mission of providing free laundry service to the residents of Franklinton. The mission began with a great boost from the congregation with over \$1,000 towards the cost and multiple donations of laundry detergent and dryer sheets. The mission started in October of 2015. As of the end of April 2016 we have provided 132 triple/double loads of wash and 361 loads of drying. Over 23 different volunteers inserted 5,271 quarters in the machines helping 73 families and individuals. That translates to \$1,227.50 from October to April. This all was done within an hour once a month. This mission provides dignity to those in need. It is a fact; people are treated differently if they have clean clothes, something many of us take for granted. The next Mission Offering for Laundry Love is scheduled for May 29th. Your donation to this mission ministry will determine if we will continue through the summer. Please consider how you might support this important mission.

Sponsor a Youth to the National Youth Event

The United Church of Christ National Youth Event only happens every 4 years. This might be the only chance for some youth to attend in their life as a youth. They have been working hard to raise the funds to attend this wonderful event however the cost of the flight is somewhat of a challenge to raise. The land trip is \$527 per youth and the flight is \$347. Please contact Mark Williams at mwilliams@first-church.org if you would like to sponsor a youth.

You Can Help in Franklinton!

The congregation is being asked to help in several ways with our Youth Mission Trip to Franklinton in June. Here are the ways you can help:

- 1). Provide lunch for a day for the youth participants and the home we are serving or an evening meal at First Church during the week .
- 2). Provide paint brushes, paint trays, yard waste bags and Home Depot gift cards.

Meal Schedule for Youth Mission Trip – We hope church commissions/committees and families will volunteer for one of the time slots.

Lunches could be sandwiches, fruit, cookies, chips and drinks. We will also want to provide lunch for those senior citizen families we are serving. The evening meal could be a variety of options that includes a salad, main course, drinks and dessert. Contact Mark Williams for more information.

June 6 – Monday – Lunch @ work location _____
Dinner @ First Church Conference Room _____

June 7 Tuesday - Lunch @ work location _____
Dinner @ First Church Conference Room - Justice and Mercy Committee

June 8 – Wednesday - Lunch @ work location _____
Dinner @ First Church Conference Room _____

June 9 – Thursday - Lunch @ work location _____
Dinner @ First Church Conference Room _____

June 10 – Friday - Lunch @ work location _____



From the Minister of Music

By Kevin Jones, Minister of Music

(kjones@first-church.org)



Although the First Church Choir will be with us in 11 a.m. worship through Sunday, June 5, the Treble and Teen Choirs finish their season on May 15. These young people meet every Sunday morning at 9 a.m. to rehearse, build vocal skill, develop musical skills and language, and learn about what it is to be a worship leader as a member of a choir. We are fortunate to have parents and young people like this to help lead the worship of God at First Church. And, we hope that next year, we will grow in numbers and stature. Thank you, Treble and Teen choristers, for all that you give and all that you do!

With six weeks of Eastertide already behind us, we move forward into the Ascension (always 40 days after Easter Day) and Pentecost Sunday (May 15). Trinity Sunday occurs on May 22, and then we're back to Ordinary Time, liturgically speaking. If you will remember, the term "Ordinary" doesn't mean "general or normal," but, rather, it takes its name from "Ordinal", or a means of counting, as in "ordinal number." In terms of liturgical colors, we move from white (Eastertide) to red (Pentecost Sunday), back to white for Trinity Sunday (although some traditions use red), and finally to green (season after Pentecost/Ordinary time). On Pentecost Sunday, it is traditional to wear red to church, and I encourage you to do so if you so choose.

Choir News

Liturgical Appearance Schedules

Treble Choir – Rehearsals May 1, 8 and 15 at 9 a.m.

Sing in Worship May 15 at 11 a.m.

Teen Choir – Rehearsals May 1, 8 and 15 at 9 a.m.

Sing in Worship May 15 at 11 a.m.

First Church Choir – Rehearsals May 5, 12, 19, and 26 at 7:15 p.m.

Sing in Worship May 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29

Sing Evensong May 1 at 4 p.m.

Appeal for Choir Vestments

Our appeal for new Choir vestments for the Adult and Treble Choirs is going very well. To date, we have raised approximately 81% of our \$15,900 goal. Thank you to all who have contributed. We are very grateful for your generous support.

We do still have a short way to go to meet our goal. If you would like to contribute toward the purchase of these vestments, or if you would like to sponsor a complete vestment (or two), perhaps as a memorial or in honor of a current chorister, please send a check to Marty Worth, Program Manager, c/o First Church (444 East Broad, Columbus, OH 43215), and note "choir vestments" in the memo line. If you would like to dedicate or memorialize a vestment, please include a note indicating such. Forms will also be available in the Main Office.

Thank you for your generosity and support of the choral program and music in general at First Church. Our choirs enliven our community worship life and contribute so much to the overall experience of First Church. Thank you!

Did You Know?

Did you know that audio podcasts of 11 a.m. services are made available on our website each and every week? We generally keep about five weeks of services online at any time, although a digital archive of services back into 2014 is kept offline. If you would like to listen to a service, or if you'd like to tell a friend or relative about a service and wanted them to listen, getting to the audio file is easy from any computer or mobile device. Simply go to the main First Church webpage: <http://www.first-church.org>, then click on the Worship tab at the top, then, in the right hand column on the Worship page, you will see a column that says, "Audio Podcasts of Services." Click on the "Download this podcast" under the service that you'd like to hear. On a desktop, the audio file should open in a new window. On a mobile device, it works much the same way. Happy listening in just two clicks!

Choral Evensong and Concert on Sunday, May 1 at 4 p.m.

The First Church Choir will sing Choral Evensong on Sunday, May 1, at 4 p.m. Featured music at this Evensong will be the premier of the "Gladden" Preces by Kevin Jones, Canticles by Lee Hoiby, and "Ye Choirs of New Jerusalem" by C.V. Stanford. Immediately following the liturgy, the Choir will sing the *Chichester Psalms* by Leonard Bernstein. The work is scored for counter tenor soloist, choir, organ, harp and percussion. Commissioned for the Southern Cathedrals Festival at Chichester Cathedral, Bernstein chose psalms 108, 100, 23, 31 to set in their Hebrew text evoking their original language set in a highly distinct choral setting. The music is energetic, invigorating, evocative and beautiful. Featuring Brad Findell, countertenor; Nicholas Quardokus, organist; Jeanne Norton, harpist; and Chris Slagle, percussion.

**CONCERTS
AT FIRST CHURCH**

2015 2016

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

Choral Evensong & Concert

May
1

4pm

The First Church Choir sings Choral Evensong on
May 1 at 4 pm
New responses by Kevin Jones; Canticles by Lee Hoiby

Following the Evensong, the choir will present Leonard
Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* in the choir, harp, percussion and
organ arrangement.
Featuring organist Nicholas Quardokus.



Church News

Young Ambassadors Ohio (YAO) Luncheon and Concert at First Church

The Ohio Conference UCC will send 13 youth to Germany from July 1 through July 23. Four of the youth are from First Congregational Church: Carly Kutschbach, and Will, Luke & Nina Zimmerman. It will allow our youth to experience their Reformation heritage (as 2017 is the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation!), learn about racism issues in Germany, be an ambassador of peace on Christ's behalf, experience the culture and do some mission work with the German youth.

The youth are working to raise funds to go on the trip as a group. On Sunday, May 22, we are having a German Luncheon (complete with brats, sauerkraut, German potato salad & the fixings!) after church at 12:30 pm. The youth will be there to answer your questions and share their travel plans.

Following the luncheon, we will have a concert with Rev. Dan Doty, UCC Minister at Trinity UCC in Wadsworth, singing some German Opera and Art Song. Rev. Doty is a professionally trained opera singer. He sang at the General Synod Closing worship in Cleveland last year.

Look for sign up sheets for the luncheon and concert in your upcoming Worship Bulletins and in the church office. Invite you friends and families to come, too! Thanks for your support!

Second Thursday Fellowship Meets on May 12

Join us in the Choir Room on the second floor on May 12 from 10:30 a.m. until Noon for the Second Thursday Fellowship. Our speakers and "musicians" will be John Carter and Rev. Mary Kay Beall Carter. All are welcome!

Next New Members Class Meets on May 16

If you are interested in becoming a member of First Church, please join us Monday, May 16 at 7 p.m. in the Parlor! You are invited to attend First Church's next New Member Class to explore a greater connection here. Those who wish to join First Congregational Church will be received in worship on Sunday, May 22. If you are not able to join us but are still interested in joining us, please let us know.

First Church Softball Regular Season Schedule

Week	Date	Time	Location	Home Team	Away Team
Week 1	Sun 5-1-16	6:00 PM	AB 8	First Congregational Church	P&B
Week 2	Sun 5-8-16	4:00 PM	AB 8	First Congregational Church	"QUESTIONABLE?"
Week 3	Sun 5-15-16	5:00 PM	AB 8	Health Care Logistics Cluckers	First Congregational Church
Week 4	Sun 5-22-16	5:00 PM	AB 8	Hit N Run	First Congregational Church
Week 5	Sun 5-29-16	<i>No Games - Memorial Day Weekend</i>			
Week 6	Sun 6-5-16	4:00 PM	AB 8	Buster Mcthundersticks	First Congregational Church
Week 7	Sun 6-12-16	6:00 PM	AB 8	P&B	First Congregational Church
Week 8	Sun 6-19-16	5:00 PM	AB 8	"QUESTIONABLE?"	First Congregational Church
Week 9	Sun 6-26-16	4:00 PM	AB 8	First Congregational Church	Health Care Logistics Cluckers
Week 10	Sun 7-3-16	<i>No Games - 4th of July Weekend</i>			
Week 11	Sun 7-10-16	4:00 PM	AB 8	First Congregational Church	Hit N Run
Week 12	Sun 7-17-16	5:00 PM	AB 8	First Congregational Church	Buster Mcthundersticks

Church Council News

April 19 Church Council Meeting

By Nancy Braverman, Council Secretary

The First Congregational Church council devoted most of our April meeting to a discussion of goals presented by the various church commissions for our long-range plan.

Presenting these goals were the Trustees, the Building and Grounds Commission, Christian Education, the Church Growth Commission, Budget and Finance, the Deacons, the Justice and Mercy Commission and the Music and Arts Commission. Council members will continue to discuss the goals, prioritize them and report progress in May.

In other business at the meeting:

The treasurer reported that the church office will move to an automated bill pay system for standard and recurring bills, to be monitored by staff and council officers.

Church software will migrate from a computer-based to web-based (cloud) system, allowing for better access.

As a fundraiser, the church will man two booths June 12 at the Columbus Arts Festival. The First Church Choir already runs a beverage booth at the festival, successfully raising funds.

Budget Update

Pledges Budgeted - \$646,373.80

March Actual Pledges - \$44,586.91

Pledges Needed Monthly - \$53,864.48

Columbus Arts Festival Volunteer Opportunity

First Church will run two booths at the Columbus Arts Festival on June 12, 2016. We are looking for six people to run the booths. Time is 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. If you are interested participating in this activity, please contact John Matichett at 614-564-9255.



Pledges

Just a reminder: with the Long-Range Plan, we will need to grow our pledges over the lifetime of the entire plan. So, if you have not pledged yet or would like to increase your pledge, please call Sharon, Tim or Emily and they can help you with your pledge. The main office phone number is 614-228-1741.

Justice and Mercy News

Toiletries Needed for Good Samaritan Day

The next Good Samaritan Day is Monday, May 9. Thank you for the contribution of personal hygiene items. They are really appreciated. We are in need of the following items, especially those listed in bold:

- Men's shampoo and/or body wash
- Women's shampoo and/or body wash
- **Women's deodorant**
- **Men's deodorant**
- **Disposable razors and shaving cream**
- **Toothpaste & toothbrushes**

A good source for these items in full sizes are Dollar Stores where everything in the store is \$1. Please leave your donations in the bin located outside the church office. Thank you for your continued support of this vital outreach to the community.

“Soup and Solar”

In celebration of Earth Week, please join the Sacred Earth mission for “Soup and Solar,” Tuesday May 3 at 5:30 pm. in Parish Hall. This event will pair food and fellowship with earth education, as we learn many facets of solar energy including feasibility, function, principle, affordability, and site assessment. If you have ever wondered whether solar panels are right for your home or business, or how/why solar energy works, this event is for you. Dinner is free and begins promptly at 5:30 p.m. A free seminar follows at 5:45 p.m., with ample opportunity for open Q & A. The event is open to the public, so feel welcome to bring a friend!

Jews In Solidarity with Palestinians

By Dawn George

You are invited to a presentation by and conversation with Rabbi Brant Rosen of the Jewish Voice for Peace [JVP] National Rabbinical Council on Sunday, May 15 at 4 p.m. at Broad Street United Methodist Church located at 501 E. Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio.

Background information: In June 2015 the General Synod of the United Church of Christ passed a Resolution calling for boycotting and divesting from companies that profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and people, and calling for church officials and members to persist in requests to Congress that the U.S. aid to Israel violates neither the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act, nor the U.S. Arms Export Control Act. The Resolution seeks to employ a non-violent tactic to bring an end to the Occupation.

Faith Mission Meal Schedule

First Church's Faith Mission “mission” will be serving meals to men at Faith Mission on the following dates. If you are interested in participating, please contact Linda Gieseke at lgieseke@insight.rr.com or Bruce and Fran Panek at franpan2000@yahoo.com.

May 27 dinner [Memorial Day weekend]

June 25 lunch

July 22 dinner

(none in Aug or Dec)

Sept 23 dinner

Oct 22 lunch

Nov 25 dinner [again, the day after Thanksgiving]



Justice and Mercy News

Mission Offerings

Over the first four (4) months of 2016, the Justice and Mercy Commission and First Church have received \$14,531.73 in weekly offerings. Each week, the designated mission offering is identified for a local, national or international mission or ministry that supports the work of Justice and/or Mercy. This generous spirit continues to meet the needs of the vulnerable in our community and around the world and thus we live out God's mission. We are grateful for the continued generosity of this congregation to give to designated mission above and beyond the annual giving you make to the mission and ministry of First Congregational Church.

List of Mission Offering Chart: January - April 2016		
January 3	Crossroads	\$413.65
January 10	Church World Service - Safe Water	\$548.65
January 17	BREAD	\$295.40
January 24	Coalition for Homeless	\$886.26
January 31	Good Samaritan	\$1,403.16
February 7	Mid Ohio Workers Association	\$597.28
February 10 (Ash Wednesday)	Good Samaritan	\$365.76
February 14	Back Bay	\$670.60
February 21	Kaleidoscope	\$617.34
February 28	Deep Griha (Scholarships)	\$810.60
March 6	Deep Griha (Scholarships)	\$639.63
March 13	Neighbors in Need	\$1,167.12
March 20 (Palm Sunday)	Good Samaritan	\$1,210.34
March 25 (Good Friday)	Food Pantries	\$747.00
March 27 (Easter)	One Great Hour of Sharing	\$1,454.37
April 3	Youth Mission (Franklinton)	\$760.00
April 10	Outdoor Ministries	\$717.57
April 17	Sacred Earth (Water)	\$388.00
April 24	Youth Mission Trip (National Youth Event)	\$839.00



Upcoming Mission Offering for May

- May 1 COMPASS
- May 8 BREAD
- May 15 Strengthen the Church, UCC
- May 22 Faith Mission Meal Team
- May 29 Laundry Love

Church News

First Church Joys and Concerns

MEMBERS: Sarah Garbe; Lucille Kropp; John Carter; Madeline Helmer; Bernie Martin; Ray Pendell; and families and friends who continue to mourn the loss of loved ones, including the family of Wib Smith; and Rev. Emily and Jeff Corzine, on the death of their nephew, Holden Corzine.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY: Steve Bassett and two- year-old, Frankie, on the death of wife and mother, Jenny Bassett, friends of Joe Baszynski; Bill Gutlieb; Theresa Norris; Virginia Colson-Leidheiser and the Colson and Leidheiser families; Lois Beery, friend of Mary Kay Beall Carter; Paul Caldwell, friend of Jeff Worth; Jacquelyn Banks Lowery, mother of Allison Lowery Palmer; Wendell Smith, father of Sarah Lange; Penny Montgomery, niece of Betty Johnson; Don Norris, cousin of Tim Ahrens; David Kellermeyer, uncle of Tim Ahrens; Frankie Williams, mother of Mark Williams; Jill Ford, friend of Mark Williams; the Santiago family, for improved health; Carlitos Hanke, nephew of Tom Santiago; Lisa Hanke, sister-in-law of Tom Santiago; Crucita Viruet, mother of Tom Santiago; and families and friends who continue to mourn the loss of loved ones, including the family of Officer Steven Smith and the family of Rosie Hanna.

THROUGHOUT THE WORLD: We pray for the urban and suburban poor throughout the United States. We pray for those who work to end human trafficking around the world and those who work with victims to bring healing.

In God's Hands: The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle: This month in the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, we pray with and for the following people and churches:

- *Week of May 1:* Eritrea and Ethiopia
- *Week of May 8:* Sudan, South Sudan, and Uganda
- *Week of May 15:* Kenya and Tanzania
- *Week of May 22:* Malawi and Zambia
- *Week of May 29:* Botswana and Zimbabwe

If you have any prayer requests or joys to share, please contact the church office (awagner@first-church.org or 614-228-1741, ext. 10) or one of the ministers (ecorzine@first-church.org or 614-228-1741, ext. 21 or minister@first-church.org or 614-228-1741, ext. 13).

Recent Celebration Gifts to First Church

By Bill Johannes and Jane Werum

Given to the **Jackie Owen Memorial Music Fund in memory of Jackie Owen** by William Owen

Given to the **Social Concerns Endowment Fund** by Jackie Glover

The IRA Charitable Rollover has been made permanent. Members and friends of First Church, age 70 1/2 or older, may now transfer up to \$100,000 tax-free directly from an IRA to the charity of their choice.

Please consider making a direct transfer to the Trustees, First Congregational Church, to support your favorite ministry's Endowment.

The benefits are: no income taxes are paid on the distribution from your IRA; the gift counts toward the minimum required distribution from your IRA, and the gift will make a lasting impact at First Church for many years. A description of each endowment fund can be found on the church website at www.first-church.org/EndowmentFunds.aspx

May Calendar

Sunday, May 1

9 a.m. – Teachers Appreciation Brunch – Children’s Library
9 a.m. – Worship – Parish Hall
9 a.m. – Teen/Treble Choirs – Choir and Music Activities Rooms
10 a.m. – Christian Education – Education Wing, Rooms C and D
11 a.m. – Worship – Sanctuary
Noon – Fellowship Hour – Parish Hall
4 p.m. – Choral Evensong and Concert: Bernstein Chichester Psalms – Sanctuary

Tuesday, May 3

2 p.m. – Worship Planning – Parish Family Room
3:30 p.m. – Art Committee – Parlor
5:30 p.m. – Sacred Earth “Supper & Solar” – Parish Hall
6:30 p.m. – Christian Education – Mark Williams’ office
7 p.m. – Justice and Mercy – Large Conference Room

Wednesday, May 4

11 a.m. – Book Study – Parlor

Thursday, May 5

7:15 p.m. – First Church Choir Rehearsal– Parish Hall

Sunday, May 8

9 a.m. – Treble Choir Rehearsal – Music Activities Room
9 a.m. – Worship – Parish Hall
9 a.m. – Teen Choir – Choir Room
10 a.m. – First Church Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
10 a.m. – Christian Education – Education Wing, Rooms C and D
11 a.m. – Worship: Schumacher Awards – Sanctuary
Noon – Fellowship Hour – Parish Hall

Monday, May 9

9 a.m. – Good Samaritan Day – Large Conference Room
6:45 p.m. – BREAD Nehemiah Action Meeting – Celeste Center, Ohio State Fairgrounds

Tuesday, May 10

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

Wednesday, May 11

10:00 a.m. – Staff Retreat – Kevin Jones’ Home

Thursday, May 12

10:30 a.m. – Second Thursday Fellowship – Music Room
7:15 p.m. – First Church Choir Rehearsal– Parish Hall

Friday, May 13

9 a.m. – Flower Delivery – Education Wing, Room D

Saturday, May 14

9 a.m. – Flower Pick Up – Education Wing, Room D
10 a.m. – First Church Quilters – Large Conference Room

Sunday, May 15: Pentecost

9 a.m. – Worship – Parish Hall
9 a.m. – Teen/Treble Choirs – Choir and Music Activities Rooms
10 a.m. – First Church Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
11 a.m. – Worship – Sanctuary
Noon – Fellowship Hour – Parish Hall
6 p.m. – Middle and High School Youth Groups Meeting – Parish Hall

Monday, May 16

7 p.m. – Personnel Committee – Parish Family Room
7 p.m. – New Members Class – Parlor

Tuesday, May 17

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

Wednesday, May 18

11 a.m. – Book Study – Parlor

Thursday, May 19

7:15 p.m. – First Church Choir Rehearsal– Parish Hall

Friday, May 20

1 p.m. – Deadline for Newsletter Articles

Saturday, May 21

9 a.m. – Faith Mission Meal Preparation – Kitchen
8:30 a.m. – House and Grounds – Parish Family Room

Sunday, May 22: New Members Join

9 a.m. – Worship – Parish Hall
10 a.m. – First Church Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
11 a.m. – Worship – Sanctuary
Noon – Fellowship Hour – Parish Hall
12:30 p.m. – Young Ambassadors Ohio Luncheon and Concert – Parish Hall and Sanctuary

Monday, May 23

6 p.m. – Budget and Finance Meeting – Adult Library
7 p.m. – Deacons – Large Conference Room

Tuesday, May 24

12 noon – Care Ministry Luncheon – Large Conference Room
2 p.m. – Worship Planning – Parish Family Room

May Calendar *Continued*

Wednesday, May 25

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

Thursday, May 26

7:15 p.m. – First Church Choir Rehearsal– Parish Hall

Friday, May 27

1 p.m. – Faith Mission Meal Preparation – Kitchen

Sunday, May 29

9 a.m. – Worship – Parish Hall

10 a.m. – First Church Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room

11 a.m. – Worship – Sanctuary

Noon – Fellowship Hour – Parish Hall

Monday, May 30

Office Closed All Day – Memorial Day

Tuesday, May 31

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

6 p.m. – Laundry Love – WashLand Laundromat, 1469 West Broad Street



May Fellowship Hour Schedule

May 1	Jeremiah
May 8	Kings
May 15	Leviticus
May 22	Micah
May 29	Numbers

May Acolyte Schedule

May 1	Allysa Batchelor	Alaina Thompson
May 8	Nina Zimmerman	Chutney Anderson
May 15	Allyssia Palmer	Mae Hubbard
May 22	Miriam Myers	Samatha Myers
May 29	Alaina Thompson	Cassidy Hopcraft

May Mission Offering Schedule

May 1	COMPASS
May 8	BREAD
May 15	Strengthen the Church, UCC
May 22	Faith Mission Meal Team
May 29	Laundry Love

May Crucifer Schedule

May 1	Joe Spofforth
May 8	Cameron Wade
May 15	Dylan Hopcraft
May 22	Adam Wade
May 29	Will Zimmerman

Member Birthdays in May

5/2 Allen Baker
5/3 Christopher Brooks
5/3 Mala Ghose
Matt Stevens
5/4 Sharon Ferguson
5/5 Marc Danneberger
Matty Provenzano
Rick Sayre
Mike Underwood
5/6 Eddie Anderson IV
Nick Boriin
Robyn Petras
5/7 Cameron Mailer
Morgan Shaw
5/8 Steven Deliman
Reese Magaw
Steve Secan
Ivan Vore
5/9 Cheryl Hoskinson
5/10 Anne Hudson
5/11 Paul Fishel Jr.
Kathy Young
5/13 Bill Wirsching
5/14 Kris Brant
Carol Woodard
5/15 Andrew MacGregor
Allyson Wharton
5/16 Greer Aeschbury
Elias Ewing
5/18 Nancy Burba
Kyle Danneberger
Emma Gonzalez
5/19 Gabrielle Collins
Bob Lortz
Betty Powell
Traci Shaw
Dave Wharton
5/20 Kim Crabtree
Todd Cunningham
Tom Kiesel
Matt Myers
Mike Weddle
5/21 Leslie Boltz
Martha Loy
Carol Gallagher
5/22 Nick Bruckelmeyer
Val Stichter
5/23 Guy Cole
Alex Heer
Melissa Murdock-Weygandt
5/24 Justin DeWolfe
Dorothy Vish
Chase Wagner

5/25 Dominick Blanks
Tim Brownlee
Brian Cave
Jude Clark
5/26 Luke Ahrens
Adam Ghose
Bill Heer
5/27 Sandy Bennett
Charlie Roach
Caroline Thompson
5/28 Bill Johannes
Rachel Lithgo
5/29 Arlene Reynolds
Nancy Williams
5/30 Karla Lortz
Mike Petras
Peter Worley
5/31 Lou Flocken
Ann Hunt
Judith Purdy

Member Anniversaries in May

5/3 Fran and Bruce Panek
5/4 Whitney and Kirk Marker
5/5 Lee Anne and Jared Kiesel
5/8 Nancy and Larry Braverman
Laura and Lance Collins
5/11 Lori and Ben Horne
Darla Luebbe and Elaine Stewart
5/12 Morgan and Christiana Bonito
Sarah and Bill Lange
5/13 Beth and Joe Iannarino
5/16 Beth and Andy Cooke
Shane and Lauren McDonald
Kara and Drew Warren
5/17 Stefanie and Christopher Bohnert
5/18 Sue and Ken Salak
Debbie and Colin Thompson
Jean and Lee Wetmore
5/19 Ralph and Linda Mumford
Tom Worley and Nancy Loy
5/20 Leslie and William Larson
5/22 Mario and Jessica Catenacci
5/23 Betsy Hubbard and Sam Spofforth
5/27 Phil and Candy Schneider



FIRST CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Senior Minister Timothy C. Ahrens, D. Min.
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
Organist/Choirmaster Emeritus G. Dene Barnard
Treble Choir Director Sandra Mathias, Ph.D.

DIACONATE

Senior Deacon Lynn Wallich
Deacons Sandy Bennett, Kris Brant, Valerie Conlin-Losinski, Sue Cook, Alec Dietz, Dean Hafey, Anne Hudson, Paul Leidheiser, Mary Lightbody, Dayna McCrary, Janet Newcity, Jorge Polo, Alex Rodriguez, Hugh Schultz

CHURCH STAFF

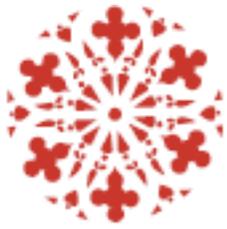
Business Manager Sharon Leidheiser
Program Manager Martha Worth
Office Manager Amy Wagner
Building Manager Thomas Santiago
Custodian William Lee, Jimmy Sibrian
Wedding Coordinators Janet Axt, Margaret Cipriani
Nursery Staff Evin Wimberly, Simone Ellerson, Natalie Barker, Taylre Arnold

CHURCH OFFICERS

Moderator Brian Cave
Moderator-Elect Kent Shimeall
Treasurer Cindy Conn
Assistant Treasurer Joe Baszynski
Secretary Nancy Braverman
Assistant Secretary Pat Patterson

COMMISSIONERS

Administration Allison Palmer
Administration-Elect Sue Cook
Church Growth Matt Myers
Church Growth-Elect Kent Rambo
Education Jennifer Okezie-Watts
Education-Elect Helen Ninos
House & Grounds Charlie Weaver
House & Ground-Elect Eric Klintworth
Justice & Mercy Tracy Ross
Justice & Mercy-Elect Al Glover
Music, Arts, Heritage Al Waddell
Music, Arts, Heritage-Elect Sharon Ferguson
Church Vitality Denise Vogt
Church Vitality-Elect Kelly Dodd
Nominating Chair Elaine Warren
Trustees Francille Firebaugh
Member-at-large Mary Kay Beall Carter
Youth-at-large Eddie Anderson IV
Deacon Council Rep. Alec Deitz



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

TO: