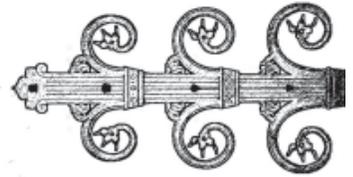


# First Church News



## First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ • Columbus, Ohio

Volume 156, Number 14  
December 20, 2008

### God Lights Our Way Through Epiphany

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister



We begin Epiphany in worship on January 4 . . . two days early!

Epiphany, which means “to show” or “to make known” is the season of light. In Epiphany, Jesus Christ is shown to be the “light of the world.” Officially beginning January 6, this festival of light celebrates the visits of the three wise men to the newborn Jesus in Bethlehem. They may have come from the west, perhaps from Iran, and followed a star that led them to Bethlehem.

Immediately after the visit of the wise men, the church celebrates the baptism of our Lord by John in the Jordan River. We will celebrate baptism on January 11. Notably, we end the season with a celebration of the Transfiguration of our Lord, February 22. In this celebration, Jesus’ entire being is changed into pure light on the mountaintop. Three days later, Lent begins. In between January 6 and February 24, we celebrate the manifestation of Jesus to all humanity.

In the Christian calendar, Epiphany is older than Christmas. It has a deeper meaning, too. Instead of being solely a celebration of Jesus’ birth, Epiphany testifies to the whole purpose of God’s incarnation in Jesus Christ. Baptism and ministry are lifted up and celebrated. The mighty signs and wonders of Jesus are celebrated in the Gospel texts. During Epiphany, we celebrate the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus’ call to discipleship, our unity in the Christian church and a multitude of healing stories. Jesus’ words and actions all point to the fullness of God’s glory known through him.

I love the season of Epiphany. It is rich in meaning and full of the call to be Christ’s people! I invite you to worship - through winter blues and cold; through snow and slush; to come worship, praise and celebrate our life in Christ during January and February.

I will preach on the first chapter of Mark’s Gospel throughout the season. Here are my sermon titles for January:

**January 4** – “Full of Grace and Truth”

**January 11** – “Baptized and Blessed”

**January 18** – Guest preacher – Rabbi Misha Zinkow of Temple Israel (See article on Page 9)

**January 25** – “Why Follow? Why Lead?”

### Fourth and Goal: Closing in on the Title

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister

The Buckeyes are headed to the Fiesta Bowl – again! They will take on Texas – again! And here I am writing about ending our stewardship giving for 2008 and planning for 2009 – again!

Imagine this: *“It is the fourth quarter. It is fourth down. We are on the goal line. We are behind. What should we do? We can’t punt. We can’t kick a field goal. We must either pass or run for the victory. Whatever the choice, we will win.”*

In the past month, you have responded well, getting us close to the goal line. Many of you have caught up with your 2008 giving! Thanks be to God! Our church’s covenant calls for all of us to “*worship, work, and serve together.*” As members, we promise to God and to one another to support our congregation. When we fail to do so, we fall short of the covenant we have made as part of this “team” called First Church. Please send in your 2008 pledges and unpledged gifts today. We need all gifts by December 31. *(Continued on Page 2)*

#### In This Issue

From The Pastors.....	2
Church News.....	3,5,6,7,8,9
Music.....	4
Christian Ed.....	6
Young Adult.....	7
Youth.....	7
Missions.....	8
Anniversaries.....	9
Birthdays.....	9
Calendar.....	10
Prayers.....	11
Staff & Council.....	11
Back Cover.....	12

# From the Pastors

## Coping During the Holidays

By the Rev. Barbara R. Cunningham, Pastoral Care Minister



Getting through the holidays is stressful, especially if you have lost one you love. Here are some hints I have accumulated over the years that I hope you find helpful.

1. Decide what you can handle comfortably and let family and friends know.
  - ♦Can I handle the responsibility of the family dinner, or shall I ask someone else to do it?
  - ♦Do I want to talk about my loved one (or my stress) or not?
  - ♦Shall I stay here for the holidays or go to a completely different environment?
2. Make some changes if they feel comfortable.
  - ♦Open presents at a different time
  - ♦Have dinner at a different time or place
  - ♦Let the children take over decorating the house, the tree, baking and food preparation, etc.
3. Re-examine your priorities: greeting cards, holiday baking, decorating, putting up a tree, family dinner.
  - ♦Do I really enjoy this?
  - ♦Is this a task that can be shared?
4. Consider doing something special for someone else.
  - ♦Donate a gift in the memory of your loved one
  - ♦Donate money you would have spent on your loved one as a gift to charity.
    - ♦Adopt a needy family for the holiday
    - ♦Invite a guest to share the festivities (perhaps someone who will be alone).
5. Recognize your loved one's presence in the family
  - ♦Burn a special candle to quietly include your loved one.
    - ♦Hang a stocking for your loved one in which people can put notes with their thoughts or feelings
      - ♦Listen to music especially liked by the deceased.
      - ♦Look at and talk about photographs.
6. If you decide to do holiday shopping, make a list ahead of time and keep it handy for a good day, or shop from a catalog.
7. Observe holidays in ways that are comfortable for you. There is no right or wrong way, and let others know of changes you want to make
8. Try to get enough rest, quiet and prayer time.
9. Allow yourself to express your feelings.
  - ♦Holidays often magnify feelings of loss. It is natural to feel sadness.
    - ♦Share concerns, apprehensions, as the need for support is often greater during this time.
10. Don't be afraid to have fun and laugh.

## The Gift of Quietness

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

One of my family's traditions while I was growing up was lighting our own Advent candles. Each Sunday evening we would gather around our family advent wreath, pray, read scripture and sing *Silent Night*.



I have carried this tradition with me over the years and it remains an important part of each Advent season for me. The time I spend lighting the candles, praying, reading, and singing, now in my own home, continuously reminds me of the gift of quietness. As the flames burn and the sacred words float in and out of my mind, the silence of the moment centers me and brings me peace and tranquility in a world of so much chaos.

Our culture has trained us to think that we always need to be the first to speak, and not just briefly, but often with a lot of words. I've discovered over the years the gifts that come with sitting back, observing, and waiting to speak. In the midst of that quiet moment before the words come out of my mouth, I am able to find the time to process what is going on around me and within me; I am able to center myself in order to interact most effectively with those in my midst; and I am able to energize myself for those moments when I do need to speak, sometimes with a lot of words.

All of this happens for me not only in many social settings, but also in spiritual moments, like those evenings sitting by the Advent wreath. May the many traditions of this Christmas season remind us of the importance of the numerous gifts that God has given each one of us, including the gift of quietness.

*(Stewardship, Continued from Page 1)*

We also need your pledges toward our 2009 campaign, **"Honoring our Legacy, Engaging our Future."** There is good news and bad news. The good news is that we have crossed the \$500,000 line for pledges! That puts us in scoring range. The bad news is we still have 89 giving units who pledged in 2008 but have not reported in for 2009. The total of their pledges this year was \$207,000. Based on a projected growth of 10% in support, these generous members will help us reach our goal of \$770,000.

We are capable of reaching \$770,000 in pledges for 2009! Under Wayne Piper's leadership, the Stewardship Campaign Committee has high expectations that those of you who did not pledge in 2008 will make the choice to join in the effort heading into this exciting new year. Send in your 2008 pledges. Send in your 2009 letters of intent. You can RUN them in (from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, or on Sunday in the offering plates). You can PASS through the air (direct deposit arrangements, mail or email Sharon Leidheiser at shar@first-church.org). Let's cross the goal line. We can do this!

## Whites Honored With Leadership Award

By Bob Kutschbach

First Congregational Church recognized Amos and Janice White for a lifetime of outstanding lay leadership during a special ceremony on October 12. They were presented with an engraved crystal cross at the 11 a.m. service and then honored with a tribute reception at Fellowship Hour. **(Shown in the photo at the right are Amos and Janice White with their award; standing, left to right, are Bob Kutschbach, Tom Worley, Tom Brownfield, the Rev Roger Miller and the Rev. Herb Goetz)**



The idea of this award started in the Endowment Committee of the Board of Trustees discussing the variety of ways members “contribute” to the church. It was mentioned that the church recognizes the history of pastoral leadership but does little to recognize the rich history of lay leadership in our church. Immediately, the names of Amos and Janice were lifted up as well as several others. The committee agreed that lay leadership at all levels, including our mission partners, should be considered, not just service to our church.

When considering the time, dedication, involvement and impact of their lifetime of lay ministry, the committee decided the Whites should be the first recipients of this award.

The accomplishments of these two are too numerous to acknowledge. However, they include numerous committee assignments, service on council and commissioner positions for both. Amos served as moderator and chair of the board. He served on several committees of the Central/Southeast Ohio Association, including chairing the Personnel and the Church and Ministry Committees. *(Continued on Page 7)*

## Sanctuary Again Sparkles with Christmas Tree

By Diana Kutschbach

Were you amazed when you came to church on the first day of Advent and saw the beautiful 15 foot-tall Christmas tree all aglow?

Did you wonder who decorated it and how they got all those lights up so high?

Well . . . it's a family affair! It has been decorated by the same families for the past seven or eight years. The Kutschbach, Henderson, Worley-Loy, Kochman and Crooms families each have their special assignments.

Gayle Henderson, Kim Kutschbach, Kendra Worley and her boyfriend, Zane, were the “fluffers”. They skillfully “fluffed” each branch and prepared them for hanging. Nancy Loy and Carly Kutschbach began hanging the branches and as they were filled in, and Nancy started wrapping the lights on the branches along with Diana Kutschbach. Beth Kochman, Sandy Crooms and Katie Kutschbach organized all the lights into strands of three and carefully laid them across the pews waiting for Bob Kutschbach to bring them to the “wrappers”. Bob organized the extension cords and had extra strands of lights ready for Diana and Nancy as they were wrapping the branches.

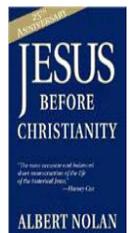
Once the first 7 feet of the tree was wrapped, all of the team came together to lift the tree so that Nancy could add the next 4-foot pole to the bottom. We then put the branches on that section and wrapped it with lights. Then, we lifted the tree again, so that the final 4-foot section of pole could be added. Finally, the last branches were added, lights were put on and the tree was secured into the base and the tree skirt was put on to cover the numerous extension cords.

You want to know just how many lights are on the tree? This year we have 6,900! A big thanks to all for their help!

The tree will be taken down sometime during the week between Christmas and New Year. Diana and Stan usually take it down, but if you'd like to help, please give Diana a call at 580-4672. It's much easier taking it down than it is putting it up!

## Book Study Begins January 7

The Rev. Tim Ahrens' next book study will examine *Jesus Before Christianity* by the Rev. Albert Nolan. It begins January 7 from 11 a.m. to noon, and will be held the first and third Wednesdays of the month in the parlor during the next three months.



The book is an engaging study of Jesus as a servant leader and rabbi of great renown in First Century Palestine. Nolan's premise is that the church's dogma, doctrine, art, and theology have largely focused on creating Jesus as a God, co-equal to our Creator and the Holy Spirit. Father Nolan is interested in discovering what Jesus did that set him apart as he taught, healed, and ministered in his times and in the context of his community.

The book is available in the church office. The cost is \$15. Please sign up in the church office. For more information, call the office at 228-1741.

# First Church Music

---

## Music Notes

By Marti Rideout, Interim Minister of Music



**December 21, 4 p.m.**  
**Festival of Lessons and Carols**  
**Prelude Music, 3:30 p.m.**

Our **First Church Choir**, **Gallery Handbell Ringers**, **Treble Choir**, organist **G. Dene Barnard**, organist and director **Marti Rideout**, guest conductor **James Gallagher**, **brass quartet and timpani**, and flutist **Brianna Burkett** will combine talents to usher in Christmas with our **Festival of Lessons and Carols**.

The service of Lessons and Carols was conceived by E.W. Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury, for Christmas Eve 1880 in Truro Cathedral, England. There will be anthems by Richard Wayne Dirksen, Herbert Howells, Tomas Luis de Victoria, John Rutter, Michael Praetorius, Hugo Distler, Elizabeth Poston and Louis Claude Daquin, instrumental offerings, nine lessons telling the story of the birth of Jesus and familiar Christmas carols sung by the congregation. This will be a blessing beyond measure. Be sure to invite your family, friends, neighbors, colleagues to this extraordinary service.

**December 24, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Christmas Eve Service and Pageant**  
**Prelude Music, 7 p.m.**

The Christmas pageant, the **Drama of the Nativity**, is the traditional highlight of this service. Acted by the youth of the church with technical assistance from parents and parishioners, the pageant tells the story of the Nativity in action and tableaux without words. Soloists **Pam Welsh-Huggins** and **Janet Axt** will join the **Treble Choir** and **Brianna Burkett** (flute), ably assisted by organists **G. Dene Barnard** and **Marti Rideout** and you, the congregation, to celebrate Jesus' birth.

**December 24, 11 p.m.**  
**Christmas Eve Service**  
**Prelude Music, 10:30 p.m.**

The **First Church Choir** will sing Christmas anthems that reflect the mystery and joy of the birth of Jesus, the **Gallery Handbell Ringers** will ring in the season with great cheer, and **Brianna Burkett**, flute, will add a lovely dimension to the Christmas music-making. Christmas carols will be sung throughout the service and **Marti Rideout** will lead and accompany the choirs and offer organ works by Langlais, J.S. Bach, Marcel Dupré, Johann Pachelbel and more.

**Congregational Concert**  
**January 25, 4 p.m.**  
**Early Music Concert**

A concert of early music will honor the memory of Ben Bechtel, member of First Church and master harpsichord builder, and feature his final and magnificent harpsichord. Artists include David Robinson, harpsichord; Beth

Owen and Susan Shaw, flute; James Bates, viola da gamba; and Robert Wisniewski, organ.

## Compline

The next evening service of Compline will be sung by the women of the First Church Choir on **January 15** at 9 p.m.

## Music Search Making Progress

By Charlie Knerr, MOM Committee Member

The Minister of Music search committee has been working hard on behalf of the congregation. Here is a list of what we have done so far and our next steps.

1. We have surveyed the congregation to receive input as to what the members would like to see not only in the next Minister of Music, but also in the music ministry of First Church.
2. We have broadly advertised the position and have materials from many qualified applicants.
3. We have read and discussed all the materials received and have listened to the recordings our candidates have sent.
4. We are in the process of narrowing the list of candidates to a reasonable number to conduct phone interviews and face-to-face interviews/auditions.

Our hope is to interview/audition our top candidates by the end of March and present the church with a candidate shortly after Easter. Of course when the face-to-face interviews are held, there will be opportunities for the choir and others to participate. Throughout this transition time, we have been grateful for Marti Rideout for the gifts she brings to First Church. If you see her, please offer your thanks!

Our committee appreciates your trust and your prayers. If you have any questions regarding the process, contact committee members Charlie Knerr or Nell Cole.

## First Church Christmas Schedule

*Christmas Eve, Wednesday, Dec. 24*

*7 p.m. - Prelude*

*7:30 p.m. - The Drama of the Nativity*

*10:30 p.m. - Prelude*

*11 p.m. - Candlelight Communion Service*



## Bethlehem on Broad to Brighten Holiday for Needy

*By Arlene Reynolds and Sondra Kesler*

There are lots of different ways to mark the holiday season. But for many of those who have participated in our yearly ecumenical fellowship, there is no better way to celebrate the birth of Christ than through our annual Bethlehem on Board Street.

On December 20, over 1,200 food boxes with gift certificates for perishable foods were given out by participating churches. We gave \$1,500 to this project. On December 6, food, gently used clothes and school supplies were distributed by Project Help. We assisted with \$1,500. Mary and Jim Flewless helped Sandy Holly with this tradition.

On Christmas Day, Thursday, December 25, the doors of First Church will open at 9 a.m. Dinner will be served from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. (There will be no carry-out meals). There will be entertainment, caroling, gifts, toiletries, free phone calls and children activities. Please e-mail [bethonbrsr@aol.com](mailto:bethonbrsr@aol.com) or call 614-228-7338 to donate or to volunteer.

Your monetary gifts are greatly appreciated. This year our budget is higher because of increase in food costs, security costs and \$10 gift certificates for men, women and teens. We will be accepting toys for children. Pick up one of our brochures or go to the First Church Web site for full details of this year's Bethlehem on Broad Street.

**Don't Forget:  
Annual  
Congregational  
Meeting  
January 25, 2009  
After Worship**

## New Church Mailboxes Are Here

*By Sharon Leidheiser, Business Manager*

As of January 1, 2009 all members living within 50 miles from the church will have a church mailbox. Check with the office for details. A big thank you to David Loy for building the new mailboxes and to Rick Sayre, Bert Cook and Stan Parron for putting them in place.

## Closing the Church Books for 2008:

We are closing the accounting books for 2008 and need any pink slips or reimbursements due to members by Dec. 19. Please give your information to Sharon Leidheiser to process or put in her mailbox in the church office. Please do not include sales tax; the church cannot reimburse sales tax because we are a tax exempt organization. Pink slips can be found in the office.

**Also, a reminder that committees must submit their year-end reports by Jan. 3, 2009, at 1 p.m. Email them to [dmahoney@first-church.org](mailto:dmahoney@first-church.org).**

**Final Pledge Commitments:** If you have not paid your final pledge for 2008, Sharon will be in the office the week of December 29-31 from 7 a.m.-3 p.m. (except on Dec. 31 when the office closes at 12:30 p.m.) You also have the option to mail, bill pay or transfer stock to pay your pledge as long as it is done on or before Dec. 31. If you cannot fulfill your pledge, please contact Sharon (228-1741, ext. 11, [shar@first-church.org](mailto:shar@first-church.org)). All information is confidential.

## Come Join the Choir

The First Church Choral Society will sing *A Song of Praise* by Felix Mendelssohn, in honor of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, at the March 29, 2009, concert. Rehearsals begin in January. If you have had experience singing in a choir and would like to participate, please contact Marti Rideout at [martirideout@sbcglobal.net](mailto:martirideout@sbcglobal.net) or 614-487-9970, or [mrideout@first-church.org](mailto:mrideout@first-church.org), 614-228-1741, ext. 14.

## Notes From Christian Education

By Mark S. Williams, Director of Christian Education

### Monday Night Lights Series Resumes January 5 at 7 p.m.

Monday Night Lights gets under way again January 5 with the movie *Little Miss Sunshine*.



The movie takes a hilarious ride with the Hoovers, one of the most endearingly fractured families in comedy history. These days, everyone seems to believe that his or her family is dysfunctional in some way. People have an intrinsic need to trace the source of their brokenness and the family is an easy target. The truth, however, is that while our family relationships can cause us great suffering, they can also be the single most significant starting place for the work of healing grace. In *Little Miss Sunshine*, the Hoover family has so much brokenness, but they find that their love for one another helps them overcome all the pain and make a fresh start.

Plan now to attend a great discussion about this film at **Monday Night Lights** on January 5 at 7 p.m.

<b>Upcoming Monday Night Lights</b>	
<u>Date</u>	<u>Movie</u>
February 2	V For Vendetta
March 2	An Inconvenient Truth
April 6	Brokeback Mountain

**Limited Edition Ornament** – First Church is continuing our exciting program in celebrating the history of our church through an ongoing Christmas Ornament project. Each year, one of our beautiful stained glass windows is featured as an ornament. This series started last year and will continue the next 19 years. The first ornament was the “Shepherd Window” that is located in the Gladden Chapel. This ornament is still available in limited quantity. The 2008 ornament is “The Light of the World” window, which is located in the sanctuary in the Parable Windows. It can be purchased at the conclusion of the 9 a.m. service and during the Fellowship Hour after the 11a.m. in the Parish Hall. Both ornaments are \$15. Don’t miss out on this year’s ornament . . . only a limited number are available.

**Education Brochures Available:** The Winter Quarter Education brochures are now available in several locations throughout the church. The brochures are in the end of each pew in the sanctuary, the narthex, literature rack outside the office, posted on bulletin boards and on the church Web site. The programming for Adult Education continues through our Sacred Conversation themes. Please take a look and join us for an informative program.

## Meet Our Newest Members

Welcome those who joined First Church on October 26.

**Jennifer Riley Williamson** – Jennifer lives with her husband Dan and daughter Riley in German Village. She is a PHD candidate at Ohio State University and works at Nationwide Children’s Hospital. She enjoys gardening and skiing.



**Mike Weaver and Jennifer Casaletta** – Mike and Jennifer live in the Grove City area. Mike is a high school teacher at Grove City and Jennifer is high school teacher in Olentangy schools. Both enjoy sports and traveling. Mike and Jennifer are in the midst of planning their 2009 wedding at First Church.



**Brian Cave and Abby Leichman** – Brian and Abby are downtown residents and will be married at First Church in 2009. Brian is a CPA and loves OSU football. Abby is a kindergarten teacher in Bexley and is a marathon runner.

## Meyers-Briggs Seminar is Feb. 7

Have you ever wondered why some people talk more than others? Have you wondered why some people are so good with numbers and details while others are “big picture” people? How do you make decisions – with your heart or with your head?

Introverts and extroverts; sensors and intuitives; thinkers and feelers; judges and perceivers. These four dichotomies compose the MBTI personality types.

On Saturday, February 7, 9-11:30 a.m., Rev. Tim Ahrens will lead a workshop at First Church on Myers-Briggs personality types. A second session, designed for couples, will be held from noon to 2:30 p.m. There is a \$5 processing fee for the seminar.

Rev. Ahrens has been a trainer for Myers-Briggs for 13 years. He has administered, scored, taught and learned from hundreds of people about the variety of 16 possible personality types.

This workshop is open to anyone. However, everyone needs to answer the MBTI questions and have them scored before the workshop. So, beginning January 4 and ending February 1, you will be able to fill out and answer the questions. The forms will be available in the church office. Questions? Email Tim at: [tim@first-church.org](mailto:tim@first-church.org)

## YAYA Ministry

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

### Youth Announcements

**Bethlehem on Broad Street:** The middle school and high school youth groups will volunteer as a team at "Bethlehem on Broad Street" on **Monday, Dec. 22, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., in the first church middle school youth room.** We will wrap and fill toiletry bags to give to those who need them. Bring scissors, tape and wrapping paper, as well as items to fill the bags, including toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, lotion, deodorant, sandwich sized zip lock bags, women's/men's packaged underwear and socks, children's socks, gloves and \$10 gift cards from Kroger or Wal-Mart.



**Young Adult Holiday Party:** *Dec. 29, 7:30 p.m., at Rev. Lori's house (contact her directly for directions).* Come for an evening of snacks, games and more! It will be a great time to celebrate the holiday season and reconnect with all of First Church's young adults who spend much of their time out of town (at school, etc.).

**Exploring Prayer: Middle school youth group event, Sunday Jan. 18, 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.** Prayer, in the most basic sense, is talking with God. Sometimes it is easiest to talk with God when we are moving, other times it is easiest when we are writing, singing, drawing, in silence, or with others. We will explore different types of prayer and find out what works best for each of us.

**Faith and Music: High School youth group event, Sunday Jan. 18, 6 – 8:30 p.m.** For years, many individuals have expressed their faith most effectively through music. We will discuss what sacred music has been like historically and how religious people express their faith today through various forms of music (traditional, classical, rock, rap, etc.).

Mark your calendars now for these other upcoming events:

- **Feb. 8:** Youth Sunday
- **Feb. 15 – 16:** High School Ski Trip (Mad River Mountain Ski Resort)
- **Feb 20 – 21:** Central Southeast Ohio UCC Association Middle School Youth Event at Pilgrim Hills, 5:30 p.m. Friday – 5 p.m. Saturday.

### Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Youth Ministry Partners strengthen our ministry! November Youth Ministry Partners included: Luke Ahrens, Jason Bishop, Cami Curren, John Deliman, Janette Hoffman, Matt Myers, Mike Petras, Robyn Petras, Susan Rhoads, Alex Rodriguez, Ben Rowley, Cori Rowley, Rick Sayre and Andrew Welsh-Huggins. To volunteer as a youth ministry partner, please contact Rev. Lori (228-1741, ext. 21, or [ltisher@first-church.org](mailto:ltisher@first-church.org)).

**Pub Theology:** *January 13, 2009, 7 – 9:30 p.m., Red Door Tavern, 1736 W. 5th Ave.* The young adult ministry of First Church is starting a new thing! Once a month, we will gather in the community – at the Red Door Tavern in Grandview – for an informal, comfortable evening of dinner or snacks, relationship-building and connecting with one another, while also discussing a hot topic issue. In January, Matt Stevens, the Ohio regional director of Church World Service, will join us and share about Church World Service ([www.cws.org](http://www.cws.org)) and his experiences with global poverty. Throughout our discussion, we will question and explore our roles in contributing to and responding to the global hunger crisis. Come for an exciting time of fellowship and discussion!

**Cabaret Night, March 28, 2009, 7-9 p.m.** The First Church youth will be hosting a cabaret night in the Parish Hall as a fundraiser. It will be an evening of food, entertainment and fellowship. If you want to perform or help with preparations, committees are forming now. Contact Rev. Lori.

**Grandview Gallery Hop:** Our young adults will be going to the Grandview Gallery Hop on Dec. 27 at 6 p.m. RSVP to Rev. Lori by Dec. 24.

**Young Adult Dinner:** First Church Young Adults will be going to Peking Dynasty (1773 W 5th Ave.) on January 17. Meet at the restaurant at 6:30pm. RSVP to Rev. Lori by Jan. 15.

---

*(Whites continued from Page 3)*

Janice helped found the Ohio Hunger Task Force and served on the National Hunger Task force Board. She also served on several association committees. Both Janice and Amos were elected moderator of the Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ. Janice was the first woman and the first African-American to ever hold this position in 1975. Ralston Werum is the only other First Church member to have served in this office. Janice also served on the executive committee of the national church for six years, and Amos was elected as chair of the United Church Board for World Ministries.

These two outstanding lay leaders clearly deserved this recognition!

# News & Missions

---

## Board of Trustees, Part 7: IRA Charitable Donations

By Phil Stichter, Trustees Chairperson

The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 extends for calendar years 2008 and 2009 the "IRA charitable rollover" provision. This provision allows **taxpayers aged 70½ or older to make tax-free contributions of up to \$100,000 in both 2008 and 2009** from either traditional IRAs or Roth IRAs (but not from 401(k) plans) to the church or to other qualified charitable organizations.

The contribution must come to the church **directly from the IRA account**. Donations from these IRAs are not treated as an itemized deduction, but are **excluded from taxable income**, even if you take the standard deduction. Also, the amount contributed from your IRA will go toward satisfying the mandatory minimum annual withdrawal requirement that begins at age 70½.

Every donor's circumstances are different so please consult with your tax advisor to see if an IRA charitable rollover is right for you.

Sheldon Taft has taken advantage of this provision by making in this calendar year a significant contribution to the church through a "Church Expansion Fund". This fund was established for the purpose of "acquiring and developing property adjacent to the church's principal place of worship at 444 East Broad Street".

We encourage additional contributions to this fund (or to other funds that have been described in this series of articles) from members who can take advantage of the IRA charitable rollover provision either this year and/or next year. We also encourage all members of the congregation to consider making charitable contributions to one of these funds, regardless of whether you can currently take advantage of the IRA charitable rollover provision.

On behalf of the trustees, I want to thank you for taking the time to read the seven articles that have appeared during this year about the work of the trustees and about the funds that have been established over many years by members of this church. These funds are an important part of our legacy, a legacy that we want to perpetuate. Thank you.

---

## Mission Offerings Schedule

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

**January 4: Touching Tiny Lives**  
**January 11: Gladden Community House**  
**January 18: Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Fund, Washington, D.C.**  
**January 25: Faith Mission**

## Recent Celebration Gifts to First Church

By Bill Johannes and Jane Werum

Given to the Remembrance Fund in celebration of the life of Wallace Cannon by:  
**Frank and Carol Hussey**  
**Habitat for Humanity**

Given to the House and Grounds Committee in celebration of the life of Wallace Cannon by:  
**Raymond Pendell**

Given to the Remembrance Fund in celebration of the life of Ben Bechtel by:  
**Joanne Morse**  
**Carol Smith**  
**James and Carol Gallagher**

Given to the Harpsicord Fund in celebration of the life of Ben Bechtel by:  
**Columbus Chapter Piano Technicians Guild**

Given to the Starr-Wingfield Furnishings Fund by:  
**Rupert D. "Twink" Starr**

Given to the G. Dene Barnard Music Endowment Fund in celebration of Bill Boden's many years of service to the music programs of First Church by:  
**Bill and Gail Johannes**

*Your gifts, payable to First Congregational Church, are appreciated. Celebration Gifts may be designated to the Remembrance Fund or an endowment fund and given in honor of a particular moment in the life of a friend or family member. The gold Celebration Gift folders are found in the pews and office.*

---

## Fellowship Hour Beverage Sales:

Coffee and tea sales will be available on Jan. 4 and 18 during fellowship hour. This is a UCC coffee project initiative and your participation is greatly appreciated. If you miss the regular sale, call Nancy Burba on Wednesdays in the church office at 614.228.1741, ext. 28.





## Rabbi to preach here Jan. 18

On the Martin Luther King weekend, Sunday, January 18, First Church will welcome Rabbi Misha Zinkow to our pulpit at the 9 and 11 a.m. services. Rabbi Zinkow will preach on the prophets and social justice in a sermon titled "Remembering the Covenant: "Moses, King and Obama."



Rabbi Zinkow has served in various positions, including as a Hillel rabbi at Ohio State University from 2001 to 2004. He has developed expertise in the areas of worship renewal, lifelong learning, social justice and synagogue transformation.

**Interfaith event set for Jan. 31:** First Church will join with Congregation Tifereth Israel and the Islamic Center of Central Ohio in a lecture and discussion on interfaith dialogue on Saturday, January 31. The event is free and will be held at Tifereth Israel at 8 p.m.

The evening will feature a lecture by Rabbi Arnold Resnicoff. He is a consultant on interfaith values and interreligious affairs; a retired Navy chaplain who earned the Defense Superior Service Medal for his work with military and civilian leaders throughout Europe, Africa, and the Middle East while serving as the command chaplain for the U.S. European Command. See next month's newsletter for more details of this event.

## First Church Stepped Up to Help

*By Bev Cook, Mission Commission co-chair*

Thanks to all the members of the congregation for their tremendous response of food on Thanksgiving Sunday. We divided the food and distributed it to Broad Street Presbyterian food pantry and Gladden Community House food pantry. Both food pantries were very appreciative of the support provided by First Church members.

During a time when so many people are struggling, we are grateful for the many blessings we have – and we are thankful that our members reach out to those less fortunate. Thank you also to the members who contributed gift cards for the teen-agers at Gladden. The cards will provide these teenagers with the opportunity to purchase a Christmas gift in what otherwise could be a very bleak time for them.



## Member Happy January Birthdays

1/1:	Priscilla Mondiek	1/15:	Thom Smith
1/2:	Amos White	1/16:	Pam Kallner
1/2:	Gerry Worth	1/16:	Dee Sturgill
1/3:	Rick Welch	1/16:	Lisa Warrick
1/4:	Sarah Giffen	1/19:	Jordan Cole
1/4:	Jorge Polo	1/20:	Mike Henderson
1/4:	Mark Williams	1/21:	Rebecca Sterrett
1/4:	Jordan Knerr	1/24:	Nancy Pennell
1/5:	James Woodard	1/24:	Joyce Ward
1/5:	Tom Hadley	1/24:	Sarah Lange
1/6:	Virginia Elam	1/24:	Kevin Butler
1/6:	Taimur Chaudhri	1/26:	Gunter Garbe
1/7:	Harry Guynn	1/26:	Julia Stewart
1/8:	Brad Keely	1/26:	Sarah Hughes
1/8:	Michaele Bishop	1/27:	Janet Younger
1/9:	Carl Gelfius	1/28:	Elmer Lightbourne
1/9:	Amy Nosse	1/28:	Teresa Polo
1/11:	Raymond Pendell	1/29:	Jane Ward
1/11:	Roger Sankey	1/29:	Catrina Drotleff
1/11:	Jon Wilson	1/29:	Tom Brownfield
1/12:	Linda Mumford	1/29:	Martha Fullemann
1/12:	Partrick Keller	1/29:	Sarah Mitchell
1/13:	Eddie Fleurant	1/29:	Wayne Henry
1/13:	Abby Leichman	1/29:	Amy Fulton
1/13:	Kendra Worley	1/31:	Michelle Paullo
1/14:	Katherine Waller		

## Member Happy Anniversaries

1/3:	Sondra and Wally Kesler
1/4:	Kristi Thompson and Stan Myers
1/5:	Malini Gnanatheeban and Pavan Peter
1/6:	Deena and David Bowers
1/9:	Barbara and David Knox
1/16:	Carol and James Woodard
1/25:	Marilyn and Ed Minter

**OOPS!** If we miss your birthday or anniversary, let us know by contacting the church office at 614.228.1741, ext. 17, or by emailing [dmahoney@first-church.org](mailto:dmahoney@first-church.org).

## CDs of services now available

*By Kay Metz, Senior Deacon*

Do you know that for just \$1 you can buy a CD recording of the Sunday service? And it is yours to keep!

The CDs are one of the benefits of the wonderful new sound system our church purchased last year. The deacons record the worship service, special services and memorial services. Three copies are made after each service and the most current copies are put in the literature rack outside the church office.

The deacons ask that anyone taking a CD come to the office and put \$1 in the bowl made from magazine pages (we are trying to be green). This money goes to replenish our CD supplies. If you want a copy, but we do not have the one you want, leave us a request and we will make it for you. Right now we have extra copies of "A Celebration of Women Preaching" series. Thank you for your supporting the deacons!

# Church Calendar

---

## Sunday, December 21

9 am: Early Worship Service - PH  
9 am: Treble Choir - Choir Rm  
10 am: Education Hour  
10 am: First Church Choir - Choir Rm  
11 am: Worship Service - San  
12 pm: Fellowship Hour - PH  
4 pm - Lessons and Carols - San

## Monday, December 22

11 am - Youth Group BOBS Volunteering  
6 pm: Pageant Rehearsal - San

## Tuesday, December 23

Noon: First Church Care Ministry Team - PR  
7 pm: Personnel - LC

## Wednesday, December 24, Christmas Eve

12:30 pm - Office Closes  
6 pm - Makeup Call for Pageant  
6:30 pm - First church Ringers  
7 pm: Prelude  
7:30 pm - Worship (Pageant)  
10 pm - First Church Choir  
10:30 pm: Prelude  
11 pm - Christmas Eve Communion Service

## Thursday, Friday December 25, 26

Office and Building Closed

## Sunday, December 28

9 am: Early Worship Service - PH  
9 am: Treble Choir - Choir Rm  
10 am: Education Hour  
10 am: First Church Choir - Choir Rm  
11 am: Worship Service - San  
12 pm: Fellowship Hour - PH

## Monday, December 29-Friday, January 2

Office and Building Closed

## Sunday, January 4

9 am: Early Worship Service - PH  
9 am: Treble Choir - Choir Rm  
10 am: First Church Choir - Choir Rm  
10 am: Education Hour  
11 am: Worship Service - San  
Noon: Fellowship Hour - PH

## Monday, January 5

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

## Tuesday, January 6

6:30 pm: Children's Ed - Ed Wg Rm C

## Wednesday, January 7

9 am: Staff Meeting - LC  
11 am: Book Study - PR  
7 pm: Young Adult Ministry - Rm D

## Thursday, January 8

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

## Friday, January 9

3:45 pm: Parents for Others - Toddler Rm

## Saturday, January 10

10 am: Quilters of First Church - LC

## Sunday, January 11

9 am: Early Worship Service - PH  
9 am: Nominating Committee - PFR  
9 am: Treble Choir - Choir Rm  
10 am: Education Hour  
10 am: First Church Choir - Choir Rm  
11 am: Worship Service - San  
12 pm: Fellowship Hour - PH  
12:30 pm: Confirmation Class - Rm D

## Tuesday, January 13

6 pm: Music Committee - PR

## Wednesday, January 14

9 am: Staff Meeting - PR

## Thursday, January 15

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

## Saturday, January 17

9 am: House & Grounds - LC

## Sunday, January 18

9 am: Early Worship Service - PH  
9 am: Treble Choir - Choir Rm  
10 am: Education Hour  
10 am: First Church Choir - Choir Rm  
11 am: Worship Service - San  
12 pm: Fellowship Hour - PH  
6 pm: Youth Group - Middle School Rm  
9 pm: Compline - San

## Monday, January 19

### **Martin Luther King Day - Office Closed**

6 pm: Stephen Ministers - Adult Lib  
7 pm: Budget & Finance - LC  
7 pm: Trustees - PR

## Tuesday, January 20

7 pm: Council - LC

## Wednesday, January 21

9 am: Newsletter folding - LC  
9 am: Staff Meeting - PR  
11 am: Book Study - PR

## Thursday, January 22

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

## Friday, January 23

6 pm: Faith Mission Men's Shelter Meals

## **BREAD Sets Sights on 2009**

*By Priss Endo*

First Church members attending the BREAD annual meeting on November 24 celebrated the passage of Issue 5, ending predatory lending in Ohio, and the reduction of truancy in six Columbus City Schools through the KEY truancy program. Also at the meeting, it was announced that the first Muslim congregation was joining BREAD.

Delegates voted to make neighborhood blight the BREAD initiative for 2009. The kick-off research campaign for neighborhood blight and existing research and action committees on health care access, crime and drugs, and education and youth was held on December 9. The result of the research process will be the presentation of an initiative that addresses neighborhood blight at the Nehemiah Action Assembly on May 4.

The BREAD team is working on expanding the social justice network at First Church. The network is made up of people who commit to attending the the assembly and bringing three people with them. The goal is to turn out half the weekly worship attendance at the assembly. The next meeting to discuss recruiting people for the network will be January 5.

# Prayers



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

*Please pray for those who continue to walk through grief and loss, for those battling illness and addictions in their families, for all serving in Iraq and elsewhere and for others in need. Please offer prayers for those who are lonely, lost and hurting. Pray for our nation as we face all too much anxiety, fear and uncertainty with faith, hope and love. May God bless you in your giving and in your living in Christ's love and grace. Amen.*

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

## January Fellowship Hour

January 4: Ruth - Matt Stevens  
January 11: Samuel - Amy Wagner  
January 18: Zechariah - Nancy Loy  
January 25: Acts - Joanne Avers (Coffee only)

## December and January Acolyte Schedule

December 28: Thomas Welsh-Huggins & Reel Chaudhri  
January 4: Jaden Martin-Wynia & Carly Kutschbach  
January 11: Camille Kesler & Jacob Kesler  
January 18: Emma Welsh-Huggins & Sarah Ahrens  
January 25: Ella Kosher & Meri Roach

## Next Newsletter Deadline

Articles Due: Monday, January 12 by noon  
Email: [dmahoney@first-church.org](mailto:dmahoney@first-church.org)  
Folding Team: Wed., January 21, 9 a.m.

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

### Church Staff

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

### Church Council

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

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

Non-Profit Org.  
**US Postage Paid**  
Columbus Ohio  
**Permit #586**

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

TO:

[Empty dashed box for recipient address]



**The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ**  
444 E. Broad St. Col., OH 43215  
Phone: 614.228.1741 FAX: 614.461.1741  
Email: [home@first-church.org](mailto:home@first-church.org) Web site: [www.first-church.org](http://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