



Christmas is a Time of Worship and Service

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister



Christmas Day fell on a Sunday in 1966. I was 8 years old. Mom and Dad were clear that we would open one gift before going to church. We would worship, return and open our other gifts after worship. Although I didn't like the idea of waiting so long to open Christmas gifts, I had no choice in the matter. So, following Christmas Eve worship, we came home, I went to bed and dreamt of Christmas morning.

During the night, a snowstorm swept through my hometown of Lansdale, Pa. There was at least a foot of snow on the ground when I awoke Christmas morning. Church was cancelled. This was a real answer to prayer! In my mind this meant we would get to the gifts right away. All my Christmas gifts would be in my possession sooner. So, I leaped out of bed, went downstairs, dumped my stocking, opened one gift and was eating breakfast when my Dad declared, "We are all going outside after breakfast to shovel snow for neighbors in need."

I thought he was kidding. None of our neighbors were going anywhere. Why bother?! But I dutifully dressed in my snow pants and boots, walked past the Christmas tree and all the freshly wrapped gifts and headed out into the tundra which was my front yard. What I beheld was a beautiful, peaceful and sunny winter wonderland.

We shoveled our way off the porch, down the sidewalk and out to the street. We dragged our shovels to "Aunt" Ethel's house, where following our acts of Christmas charity, we had hot chocolate and cookies. Then house to house, we helped our neighbors in need. Hours had passed when we finally made it home. My dad declared that we had worshiped by serving God and our neighbors in need. Now we could open our gifts.

I don't think of that day often. But I will always remember my father's belief in service before self. Christmas is coming once again and we are being called to serve the newborn Christ in these days of need. I hope and pray you find ways with your family and friends to put service before self. I pray that you worship and serve in joy and delight. Whether here at First Church with Bethlehem on Broad Street or at Faith Mission, or giving love and care to your neighbors in need, may the Christmas spirit move you to year-long ways of loving and serving your neighbors.

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Christmas 2009 at First Church

*December 20 – Service of Lessons and Carols,
Sanctuary, 4 p.m.; Prelude 3:30 p.m.*

*December 24 – 7:30 p.m., pageant; candlelight
service, 11 p.m.*

December 25 – Bethlehem on Broad Street, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

From the Pastors

Saying Good-Bye Never Easy, But First Church Will Endure

By the Rev. Barbara R. Cunningham
Associate Minister

*I am shoreless
Set adrift by my insecurities
Caught in an updraft of doubt and fear
Until I am so firmly in midair
That I have nothing to hold onto but faith. . .
In God, in myself, and in my abilities.
Only then am I able to feel
The wings that were always there
Waiting for my faith
To enable me to soar.*

Wings of Faith, by Debra Drummond



Leaving is very hard to do when one has grown to love the people here as I have! It makes me feel "set adrift." You have a lot to be proud of in this congregation. There is a love for the people here and for the outside world, a concern for the environment, a love for the children all around us, and a great staff to guide you. What lessons I have learned that I will carry with me forever. And you can keep my love in your hearts forever.

When the new person comes to this position, I know that there is enough love in this congregation to open your arms to that person. You have gone through changes very well before, and I know this one will be a good transition for the congregation and for the staff.

I thank you for all the gifts of friendship and care you have given me in the two years of my interim. I will not be available to you for services, but my friendship never leaves.

We are always putting together the pieces of the puzzle of life without knowing the picture ahead of time. Unsuspected meaning will begin to emerge from the pieces, and, over time, as has happened in the past, this meaning will prove itself to be durable, trustworthy, even transformative if we but open our hearts to the new picture the puzzle presents.

You are here, with this puzzle, and you will discover a most beautiful puzzle worked on together as only you at First Congregational

Church United Church of Christ can do. I love you all!

Celebration of Rev. Ahrens' Ministry At First Church Set For Jan. 24

By the Rev. Sarah Reed, Senior Deacon

Rev. Timothy Carl Ahrens began his ministry at First Congregational Church on Jan. 23, 2000. For many of us the time has passed very quickly.

With his leadership, we've seen our church grow in numbers and ministry. Membership has doubled and been blessed in its diversity; our mission and stewardship have grown significantly; the church adopted an open and affirming statement that assures the welcome of all persons; First Church celebrated its 150 years of ministry in Columbus; and educational programs have been rich.

Tim has been a strong voice in the community, advocating for equal rights, justice and peace for all persons. He helped create B.R.E.A.D. and served as its co-president. He also was a founder of We Believe Ohio, an organization of diverse religious voices, whose quest is social justice. In 2008, Tim received the William Sloane Coffin Award given by Yale Divinity School in recognition of a person's commitment to peace and reconciliation.

During worship services on January 24, 2010, we will celebrate his ministry among us and join him as we reaffirm our commitment of ministry together. The celebration will continue with a reception during Fellowship Hour after the 11 a.m. service.

Newsletter Going to Email Delivery in 2010

In an effort to save time and money, the *First Church News* is going electronic in early 2010.

Beginning with the January issue, we will be emailing the newsletter to members who have email, rather than sending it through the Postal Service. Those who do not have email can contact the church office (228-1741) and we will continue to mail it to you as we now do.

We have estimated that by eliminating most of the newsletter mailing, we will save nearly \$3,000 a year in ink, paper, postage and time.

In the meantime, don't forget that you also can read the *First Church News* online at www.first-church.org. We also will continue to post the newsletter on the Web site when we make the switch to email delivery.

Stewardship Campaign Needs Your Support to Make Its Goal

By Wayne Piper, Stewardship Chair

The response to the 2009 Stewardship Campaign at First Church has been gratifying. As of December 7, 203 letters of intent have been turned into the church office. Given the difficulty of these financial times, it truly is inspiring to know how much the members of this congregation continue to value its presence in their lives, in the life of our community and in missions that reach an even broader world.



TOGETHER

As a relatively new member of First Church, I continue to be impressed by the generosity of spirit I see in the people who join me for worship each week. But as the year winds down and the Council begins to make its financial plans for 2010, the church needs everyone to be on board – or, as the theme of this year's campaign emphasized, to be "Together" in moving our congregation into the new year.

I encourage you to submit your letters of intent. Thus far, the campaign has generated \$565,037, which is short of our goal. Please prayerfully consider what you are able to do for the church next year, and turn in your letter of intent as soon as possible. If your spiritual journey to determine your intent needs guidance, please contact one of our ministers.

You can complete your intent online at <http://www.first-church.org/PledgeOnline.aspx>, by calling your information in to Sharon Leidheiser at 614-228-1741, ext. 11, or by picking up and completing a letter of intent in the church office. And please know that your gift is deeply appreciated and will be thoughtfully used in the work of the church in the year ahead.

End-of-year Giving: We need everyone in the church to contribute to the financial needs of First Church by December 31. We are running behind on pledged income in 2009. While I realize times are tough, we need you to step up and make a difference. If you made a pledge in 2009, please meet this pledge. If you made no pledge, please make a significant one-time gift to our church. If you have met your pledge, please consider another gift to help us meet our church's needs in mission and ministry. With your generosity, we will reach our goal and continue to be a strong presence in downtown Columbus. – **Rev. Tim Ahrens**

Rev. Barbara Cunningham Leaves Her Mark On First Church

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister

In January 2008, Rev. Barb Cunningham came among us to serve as our Associate Minister in an interim capacity.

Over the past two years she has given her heart to us. She has given her smile and her hugs freely and lovingly. She taught us and nurtured our spiritual lives. She has been there for us in our joyful celebrations and our most difficult days. She has held us when we were weeping and laughed with us in our joy. She has loved us and cared for us. I am grateful for a colleague who has brought so much love, affection, insight and care to our church family.

As an interim, her time of service has come to an end. With our new Associate Minister soon to arrive, Barb's service among us is ending. We give thanks for all that she has done and been among us. Barb's last day is December 31.

I encourage you to share your gratitude and farewells with Barb. She will preach on Sunday, December 20 and 27. She will be with us on Christmas Eve. She will be around the office the last week of December. The Council is planning to celebrate Barb at our Annual Meeting on January 31. Come that day to worship at 10 a.m. (for everyone), with the meeting at 11 a.m. and reception to follow. But, moreover, take time to share your personal thoughts and feelings with Barb.

Well done Good and Faithful Servant of God! Thanks be to God for Rev. Barb Cunningham.

Monthly Budget Update



Current Pledge Income

Annual Budget - \$616,447
November Actual - \$39,561
YTD Actual - \$509,840
YTD Budget - \$565,076
Behind Budget - \$55,236

November Mission Offerings

Bethlehem on Broad Street - \$2,716.24
Catalyst - \$1,149.95
Darfur Relief - \$474.10
Good Samaritan Fund - \$4,185
Total - \$8,525.29

Doubt Will Be Featured Movie For Next Monday Night Lights

By Mark S. Williams, Christian Education Director



Doubt January 4, 7 p.m.

Playwright John Patrick Shanley both directed and adapted to the screen his award-winning play.

Although its title announces its central theme, the film also deals with change and resistance; love, fear, and intolerance; sexual abuse by priests; and even homosexuality (though the latter two are handled very subtly).



Meryl Streep and Philip Seymour Hoffman star in *Doubt*.

Thus, this is a film of big ideas that should engage Christians as they navigate through the moral maze of our times. Wayne Piper will facilitate the discussion.

Parenting Class You Don't Have to Do It All Yourself January 4, 7 p.m.

Every parent wants their child to learn responsibility for helping out at home with chores. And it's completely normal for a child to resist learning those things.

The good news is that everyday situations are the best way to teach your child about responsibility – and they may not even know that's what is happening. Join us to learn tips to use with your child. This is for parents of children of all ages.

"Children of Abraham" to Meet Again in March

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister

Over 40 Muslims, Christians and Jews finished the opening session of "The Children of Abraham: A Study of Genesis" in late November.

Under the teachings of Imam Hany Saqr, Rabbi Michael Ungar and myself, our class delved into the meaning of Genesis 1-12. We looked at creation stories, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and the Flood and the Call of Abram. We planted seeds for relationships that

hopefully will come into full bloom in the spring of 2010 when we re-gather to study Abraham's story during four more Wednesday evenings in March.

In March, we have all agreed to open the class to anyone who wants to come. So, mark your calendars for March 3, 10, 17 and 24.

We meet in the synagogue, the mosque and First Church. You will grow in many ways through this class together with other children of Abraham. If you have questions, call me 228-1741, ext. 13, or email at tahrens@first-church.org.

Come to Camp January 29-30 at Pilgrim Hills

You're invited to come to camp in January. Last year's winter rally for all ages was so good that it's being held again!



This year, you can stay overnight in one of the winterized cabins. The schedule is:

Friday, January 29

Check-in from 5-6:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Campfire with s'mores and camp songs

Sleep-over (slumber-party-style, with boys in one cabin and girls in another)

Saturday, January 30

Breakfast

Camp activities

Hear about exciting things in store for summer camp

Lunch

More camp activities

Head for home at 4 p.m.

Those interested can stay overnight or come just for Saturday. For more information, go to www.ocucc.org.

Read the
First Church News Online at
www.first-church.org

From the Music Office

By James E. Bobb, Music Minister



Last month, I shared John Wesley's exhortations from his *Selected Hymns* of 1791. In this new year, I am reminded of the continuing mission of music in worship and in Christian formation. So here are some of extracts of Ralph Vaughan Williams' preface to *The English Hymnal* (1906), followed by a prayer that our children and adult choirs are committing memory.

"In Christian song Churches have forgotten their quarrels and men have lost their limitations, because they have reached the higher ground where the soul is content to affirm and to adore. The hymns of Christendom show more clearly than anything else that there is even now such a thing as the unity of the Spirit. . . .

"The best hymns of Christendom are as free as the Bible from the self-centered sentimentalism, the weakness and unreality which mark inferior productions. . . . Is it not worthwhile making a vigorous effort to-day for the sake of establishing a good tradition? Especially should this be the case with children's hymns . . . (because) incalculable good or harm may be done by the music which they sing in their most impressionable years."

Vaughan Williams' closing statement affirms our regular use of "The Choristers' Prayer" in rehearsals and sometimes before worship:

*Bless, O Lord, us Thy servants who minister in Thy temple.
Grant that what we sing with our lips we may believe in our hearts,
and what we believe in our hearts we may show forth in our lives.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Congregational Concert

**Feb. 7, 2010
4 p.m. in the Sanctuary**

The Congregational Concerts continue with The Ohio State Men's Glee Club. Don't miss this exciting concert under director Dr. Robert J. Ward. The Ohio State University Men's Glee Club is a brotherhood that commits itself to excellence through artistry, achievement in academics and outreach to the community. The Men's Glee Club has been sharing music with the OSU campus, community and around the world since 1875.

Music Note

On **Thursday, January 21, 2010, at 7:15 p.m.**, the **First Church Choral Society** will begin rehearsals for the March 7 concert. If you are interested in joining, contact the Minister of Music for more details at jbobb@first-church.org

Ohio Conference Planning Trip for Katrina Repair Work

Although the memory of Hurricane Katrina is fading, the impact on the citizens of New Orleans is still fresh. The lack of media attention may suggest that the recovery is complete, but the fact remains that thousands of homes are still far from livable.

Volunteers from faith organizations have been the single greatest source of help in getting people back in their homes. You can be part of the recovery effort.

The Ohio Conference Disaster Response Team is sponsoring a work trip to New Orleans, leaving Ohio on May 1, 2010, and returning May 9. Housing will be in the St. Paul's Fellowship Hall in the Uptown district of New Orleans, which is a pleasant, safe neighborhood. St. Paul's is equipped with bunk beds, air mattresses and has generous bathrooms, with multiple showers, for each sex. There is a new kitchen for the group's use.

The United Church of Christ has a developed and experienced staff in New Orleans to equip and guide you in small teams to help repair local homes. The work is assigned according to your skills so that there will be no expectations beyond your capability.

Preliminary plans are to drive in rented vans with one overnight stop each way in a modern motel. The individual cost is expected to be \$300, which will cover all transportation, housing costs, and group meals at the church.

Meals while travelling and any New Orleans restaurant meals will be each person's responsibility. There will be opportunities for touring and seeing some of the local sights.

To register for the trip or for more information, contact Jim Ditzler, Ohio Conference Disaster Response Team co-director, at 330-262-3242 or jditzler@sssnet.com.

First Church News

Helping to Boost First Church Finances Can Be Easy

By David Holt, Treasurer

Here are three easy ways to provide additional financial support to First Church:

* Dine at Black Creek Bistro (51 Parsons Ave.) on Tuesdays and tell your server that you are with First Congregational Church, and 10% of your bill will be donated to First Church. Proceeds are used at the discretion of Church Council.



* Use www.goodsearch.com as your Internet search engine and specify First Congregational Church Columbus as your designated charity. Approximately one cent per search is donated to First Church for use towards Youth Mission Trips.

* Shop at Kroger and make direct contributions to First Church.

Attention Kroger Shoppers!

First Church is enrolled in Kroger's Community Rewards Program which will link purchases made with your Kroger's Plus Card so that a portion of the sale is donated back to First Church.

Follow the instructions below to sign-up as an online or bring your Kroger Plus Card to church on Sundays and look for a sign-up table in the Parish Hall during fellowship hour after worship.

A portion of your qualifying purchases will be donated to your choice of the following:

First Congregational Church #84966 – Church Council has allocated – 50% towards the annual Youth Mission Trip and 50% towards the Parking Lot Repair reserve fund

First Congregational Church Choir #81813 - proceeds used to support choir activities

To sign up, follow these steps:

* Please register your Kroger Plus card online at krogercommunityrewards.com.

* If you don't have a Kroger Plus card, they are available at any Kroger customer service desk.

* Be sure to have your Plus card handy and link your card number with one of the two First Church numbers (**81813-choir or 84966-youth mission & parking lot**) after you sign up.

* When you get to the krogercommunityrewards.com Web site, if you are already an online Kroger customer click on Sign In/Register.

* If you are a new online Kroger customer, you must click on SIGN UP TODAY in the 'New Customer?' box.

* Sign up for a Kroger Rewards Account by entering your zip code, clicking on favorite store, entering your email address and creating a password, agreeing to the terms and conditions, and selecting whether or not you wish to receive email offers etc.

* You will then get a message to check your email inbox. Go to your e-mail and click on the link within the body of the email.

* Click on My Account and use your email address and password to proceed to the next step.

* Click on Edit Kroger Community Rewards information and input your Kroger Plus card number.

* Update or confirm your information.

* Enter 81813-choir or 84966-youth mission & parking lot and click on confirm.

* To verify you are enrolled correctly, you will see your organization's name on the right side of your information page.

* Purchases will not count for First Church until you register your card.

* You must always use your registered Kroger Plus card when shopping for your purchases to be credited to First Church.

Deacons Are Important Servants in the Life of Our Church

By the Rev. Sarah Reed, Senior Deacon

“Deacon” can have many meanings. In Colonial days, deacons made sure everyone stayed awake during the pastor’s six-hour sermon. In some places deacons are preachers and in others they are servants in the world.

Our church’s constitution describes the role of Deacons this way: *The Deacons shall assist the ministers in the spiritual direction of the church, including pastoral care, worship, celebration of the sacraments and other special services.* This broad description of First Church deacons doesn’t come close to describing their ministry.

Deacons visibly perform their duties as part of worship each Sunday morning, but they are most active behind the scenes. Their attention to detail in preparing for worship creates a welcoming place for regular and occasional worshippers.

Their pastoral care may include calling or sending cards to those on our prayer list, delivering flowers after church, taking communion to those unable to attend worship, providing receptions and hospitality for funeral and memorial services, assisting in worship planning, and the list goes on. Recently, the deacons have been looking at additional ways that they may provide spiritual direction and collaboration with others to care for our members.

As you can see, deacons are important people at First Church! We are blessed by their service. One of our hymns asks: *Won’t you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you? Won’t you serve too?*

Rev. Ahrens Awarded Sabbatical Grant

On November 19, Rev. Tim Ahrens received word that he will receive a Louisville Institute Pastoral Sabbatical Grant. This \$15,000 grant was given to 39 of 400 applicants for the purpose of study and rest during the summer of 2010.

Rev. Ahrens’ proposal is entitled, “Holy Steps With the Children of Abraham.” He will study with Muslims, Jews and Roman Catholic Christians, as well as with Protestant Christians, in Spain, Israel and Egypt. Additional time will be taken for reading, study, writing and rest in the United States.

The program begins in early June and ends in late September. Preparation is being made for support of the congregation during the sabbatical which includes guest preachers from three faiths. A copy of the sabbatical proposal is available in the church office.

Bethlehem on Broad Street Still Needs Donations

Bethlehem on Broad Street needs your help. Needed are cakes, cookies, donuts, mittens and gloves, toys for children, \$10 gift certificates for teen-agers (we will purchase them). Also needed are toiletries, such as small hotel-size toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, combs, razors and shampoo.

Last year we ran out .We had over 800 for dinner and the party. We want to be better prepared this year. Please give if you can.

Don't Forget!



Annual Meeting January 31

Worship At 10 a.m. Only

Meeting Immediately After Worship

End-of-Year Reports Coming Due

Members of the First Church committees and commissions are reminded that their reports for the 2009 annual report will be due January 1.

Please send your report to Denny Mahoney at dmahoney@first-church.org by that date. The annual report must be prepared and printed for presentation to the congregation at the annual meeting on January 31.

BREAD Will Focus on Youth in 2010

By Priss Endo

At the BREAD Annual Assembly in November, representatives from 40 congregations heard testimony on three problems: crime, jobs and youth.



Bishop William Polley of Zion Christian Assembly told an audience of 356 that at house meetings held in October, "People talked about what was happening with our youth, especially middle school and high school young people.

Every year, we seem to be losing more and more kids to the streets, to gangs, to violence and crime. As an organization, BREAD has crafted a highly effective campaign to address truancy. Many of us know that truancy is a first step. But, there is more work to be done."

A majority of congregations supported Bishop Polley's testimony, voting for "youth" to be next year's problem for research and action.

New co-presidents were approved at the meeting: Rev. Robert Arbogast of Olentangy Christian Reformed Church and Rev. Jefferey Kee of New Faith Baptist Church of Christ.

The research kick-off was held at the Noor Islamic Cultural Center on December 7. A committee was formed to begin research on the youth problem, which will lead to developing an issue for presentation at the Nehemiah Action on May 3 (save this date!). Three First Church members have joined research teams: Jackie Lowery is on the Youth Research Team, Nancy Evans on Access to Healthcare; and Dawn George continues her work with Drug Court.

Fritz Family Thankful for Aspirin

By Pauline Fritz

How fortunate it was that I took medical advice about having aspirin available. Two months ago I put aspirin in the night stand by Earl's bed and in both cars.

On Saturday morning, Oct. 31, I knew where to grab two aspirin and put them in Earl's mouth as I called 911. I have been told by several doctors I saved Earl's life. The rescue squad responded quickly; even though I did not say "heart attack," you must remember to say that.

A victim should be kept sitting up, then call a neighbor and unlock the front door. In a place easily accessible, you need to have legal papers for treatment, a list of phone numbers of family and close friends, plus insurance information and a house key so you can lock the door behind you as you climb into the rescue vehicle.

I am on a campaign for everyone to have aspirin in more than one place in their house. I did not have time to go downstairs for an aspirin. It is because I acted so quickly that we have Earl with us today.

Your prayers, love and care carried both of us through some very troubled waters – God did work a miracle through good medical care and we give thanks!

Earl gives thanks daily for new life. We have been blessed beyond measure.

UCC Partnership Pilgrimage to Nicaragua Set for June 2010

The UCC's Central Southeast Association has scheduled a partnership pilgrimage to Nicaragua for June 18-26, 2010. A partnership pilgrimage is a trip to build friendship, through shared hands-on work, worship, site-seeing and other opportunities that strengthen our relationship with the members of Iglesia Mision Cristiana.

The pilgrimage will be led by the Revs. Ann Molsberry and Jenny Steindam. Please contact Jenny Steindam at 614-890-0009, or Ann Molsberry 937-243-9895 for more information.

Also, to help build an even wider awareness of our partnership with the Iglesia Mision Cristiana, several members of the Nicaragua Task Force are available to share with local association churches about their trips to Nicaragua. For more information contact the Rev. David Long-Higgins at 614-837-7734.

Mission Offerings Schedule

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

- January 3 - Gladden House**
- January 10 - CWS – Safe Water Project**
- January 17 - Martin Luther King Memorial**
- January 24 - Faith Mission**
- January 31 - Good Samaritan**



Recent Gifts to First Church

By Bill Johannes and Jane Werum

Given to the Starr-Wingfield Furnishings Fund in celebration of the life of Alan Wingfield by:

Rupert D. "Twink" Starr



Given to the Remembrance Fund in celebration of the life of Ruth Rieppel by:

Thomas Scot, Sharon Reilly and Amy Crawford

Given to the Remembrance Fund in celebration of the life of Frances Gurley by:

Janet Brookbank

Your gifts, payable to the First Congregational Church, are very much 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 friend or family member. The gold-colored Celebration Gift folders can be found in the church pews and the office

2009 Christmas Ornament Available



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.

The first ornament (2007) was the "Shepherd Window" that is located in the Gladden Chapel. The second ornament

2009 Christmas ornament

(2008) was "The Light of the World" window in the sanctuary in the Parable Windows. Both ornaments are still

available in limited quantity at \$15 each, or you can purchase both ornaments for a discounted price of \$20.

The 2009 ornament is "Jesus Blessing the Children" panel from the Jeffery Window, located above the Chancel. The cost is \$18 and payment must accompany when placing the order.

Presale of this year's ornament continues on Sundays after the 9 a.m. service and during the Fellowship Hour in the Parish Hall after the 11 a.m. worship.

Member Happy January Birthdays

| | | | |
|-----|-------------------|-----|-------------------|
| 1: | Priscilla Mondiek | 16: | Pam Kallner |
| 2: | Amos White | 16: | Dee Sturgill |
| 2: | Gerry Worth | 16: | Lisa Warrick |
| 3: | Rick Welch | 19: | Jordan Cole |
| 4: | Mark Williams | 20: | John Deliman |
| 4: | Sarah Giffen | 20: | Mike Henderson |
| 4: | Jorge Polo | 21: | Rebecca Sterrett |
| 4: | Jordan Knerr | 22: | Hope Hacker |
| 5: | James Woodard | 24: | Joyce Ward |
| 5: | Thomas Hadley | 24: | Sarah Lange |
| 6: | Taimur Chaudhri | 24: | Kevin Butler |
| 7: | Harry Guynn | 25: | Aryn Mason |
| 7: | Gary Gray | 26: | Gunter Garbe |
| 7: | Stan Parron | 26: | Julia Stewart |
| 8: | Brad Keely | 27: | Janet Younger |
| 8: | Mary Bishop | 28: | Elmer Lightbourne |
| 9: | Carl Gelfius | 28: | Teresa Polo |
| 9: | Amy Nosse | 28: | Katie Kutschbach |
| 11: | Raymond Pendell | 29: | Jane Ward |
| 12: | Linda Mumford | 29: | Catrina Drotteff |
| 12: | Patrick Keller | 29: | Tom Brownfield |
| 13: | James Fewlass | 29: | Martha Fullerman |
| 13: | Abby Cave | 29: | Sarah Mitchell |
| 14: | Katherine Waller | 29: | Wayne Henry |
| 15: | Thom Smith | 29: | Amy Fulton |
| | | 31: | Michelle Paullo |

Member Happy January Anniversaries

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

If we miss your birthday or anniversary, contact Denny Mahoney at 228-1741, ext. 17, or dmahoney@first-church.org.

**Read all First Church
Sermons Online at
www.first-church.org**

Church Calendar

Sunday, December 20

9 am – Treble Choir – Choir Room
9 am – Early Worship - PH
10 am – Education Hour
10 am – First Church Choir – Choir Room
11 am - Worship Service - San
12 pm – Fellowship Hour - PH
12:30 pm – Confirmation Class – Room D
4 pm – Service of Lessons and Carols – San

Tuesday, December 22

12:00 pm – Card Care Ministry – PFR

Wednesday, December 23

7 pm – Children’s Pageant Rehearsal – San

Thursday, December 24, Christmas Eve

12:30 pm - Office Closes
6 pm – Make-up Call for Pageant – Bell Room
6:15 pm – First Church Ringers – Music Activity Room
6:30 pm – First Church Ringers – Gallery
7:30 pm – First Church Choir – Choir Room
7:30 pm – Pageant Service – San
10 pm – First Church Choir – Choir Room
11 pm – Candlelight Service - San

Friday, December 25, Christmas Day

Office Closed

7 am-7 pm – Bethlehem on Broad Street

December 26-January 3 – Office Closed

Sunday, December 27

9 am – Treble Choir – Choir Room
9 am - Early Worship Service - PH
10 am – First Church Choir – Choir Room
11 am - Worship Service - San
12 pm - Fellowship Hour - PH

Sunday, January 3

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

Monday, January 4

7 pm – Monday Night Lights – PH

Tuesday, January 5

12 pm – Card Care Ministry – LC
6:30 pm – Children’s Education – Ed. Wing Room C

Wednesday, January 6

11 am – Book Study – LC
7 pm – Budget and Finance – LC
7 pm – Church Growth – PFR

Thursday, January 7

6:15 pm – First Church Ringers – Bell Room
7:30 p.m. – First Church Choir – Choir Room

Sunday, January 10

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

Monday, January 11

7 pm – Trustees – PFR

Tuesday, January 12

12 pm – Card Care Ministry – PFR
6 pm – Music Committee – LC
7 pm – Budget and Finance – LC
7 pm – Executive Committee – Adult Library

Thursday, January 14

10 am – Eastside Fellowship – PR
6:15 pm – First Church Ringers – Bell Room
7:30 pm – First Church Choir – Choir Room

Sunday, January 17

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

Monday, January 18

Martin Luther King Day – Office Closed

Tuesday, January 19

12 pm – Card Care Ministry – LC
7 pm – Council – LC

Wednesday, January 20

11 am – Book Study – LC

Thursday, January 21

6:15 pm – Ringers – Bell Room
7:30 pm – First Church Choir – Choir Room

Friday, January 22

6 pm – Faith Mission Men’s Shelter Meals

Fair Trade Gift Baskets On Sale

Gift baskets of Fair Trade coffee, cocoa and tea have been created for holiday giving. Sacred Earth totes also make thoughtful gifts. All may be purchased during Fellowship Hour on Dec. 20.

Prayers

January Fellowship Hour

January 3: Galatians
 January 10: Haggai
 January 17: Hosea
 January 24: Jeremiah
 January 31: Kings

January Acolyte Schedule

January 3: Michael Warrick and Katie Geis
 January 10: Joe Spofforth and Victoria Washington
 January 17: Michael Warrick and Nicholas Warrick
 January 24: Luke Zimmerman and Will Zimmerman
 January 31: Carly Kutschbach and Merry Roach
 (Schedules online at www.first-church.org)

Next Newsletter Deadline

Articles Due: Monday, January 11, by noon

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

Prayer Request: Please let us know of a prayer concern for yourself, a family member or other church member by calling the Rev. Timothy Ahrens at 614.228.1741, ext. 13, by using prayer request cards found in each pew or by emailing tahrens@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.

Baptisms

Temperance Lynn Morgan and Mala Katherine Ghose – November 29

Deaths

Barbara Heer – December 7

Weddings

Stephanie Medovich and Brice McNamee – December 5

Fellowship Hour Beverage Sales



Coffee and tea sales will be available on January 3 and 17 during Fellowship Hour. This is a UCC coffee project initiative and your participation is greatly appreciated.

~ Remember Your Loved Ones ~
 With a Dedication of Flowers

Contact Marty Worth at 614.228.1741, ext. 12,
mworth@first-church.org

Church Staff

Timothy C. Ahrens.....Senior Minister
 Barbara R. Cunningham.....Associate Minister
 James E. Bobb.....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
 Frank Wall, William Lee.....Custodians
 Nikki Boop, Rosemary Pawandiwa.....Nursery
 DeAndree Norris.....Nursery
 Linda Mumford.....Wedding Coordinator
 Jane Leidheiser.....Wedding Coordinator
 Fran Panek.....Wedding Coordinator

Church Council

Melody Leidheiser.....Moderator
 Sarah Reed.....Vice-Moderator
 Carol Gallagher.....Secretary
 David Holt.....Treasurer
 Phil Stichter.....Trustee Chair
 Frank Cook.....Administration Commissioner
 Pavan Peter.....Church Growth Commissioner
 Diana Kutschbach.....Education Commissioner
 Bill Rhoads.....House & Grounds Commissioner
 Anne Hudson, Fran Panek.....Mission Commissioners
 Julia Myers, Amy Fulton.....Parish Life Commissioners
 Charlie Weaver.....Deacon
 Kevin Butler.....Deacon
 Shannon Washington.....Music, Arts, Heritage
 Nancy Fields.....Budget and Finance
 Kim Kutschbach.....Member-at-large
 Doug Buck.....Member-at-large

The First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
444 E. Broad St.
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3885

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DATED MATERIAL - VERY IMPORTANT

Please Deliver: Monday, December 21, 2009

TO:

[Empty dashed box for recipient address]



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