

Ours is An Exciting Faith

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister



There is an ancient rabbinic tradition that says, if we learn to celebrate the Sabbath properly and fully even once, the Messiah will come. This is a striking view. It suggests that living the Sabbath is the fulfillment of perfection and puts us in complete harmony with the life-giving and life-promoting ways of God. Another way of viewing our relationship with God is this: without the Sabbath, we stand in peril of losing life's basic center and orientation.

So our question becomes, what does it mean to *live the Sabbath properly and fully*? To live the Sabbath means to live with a heart of gratitude and joy, trusting that in God's love and grace, we will experience the fullness of life. Simply put, living the Sabbath means taking time each day, each week, each Sabbath Day to be silent, to pray, to turn our lives and our wills over the care of God.

There are many prayers which guide daily living. **The Lord's Prayer**, Matthew 6:9-15, calls upon our God in the totality of gratitude, intercession and consciousness to bless and keep us in God's will and way. **The Serenity Prayer** is a constant guide through the perils of life: *God, grant me Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to Change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.* **The Prayer of Jabez**, I Chronicles 4:9-10, calls upon the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that you would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from all harm, that I may cause no pain!"

There are so many prayers in scripture and in our traditions that center us in living the Sabbath. We need only offer our hearts and minds to God and God will provide for us. *We have an exciting faith!*

While Christianity is too often beaten down by critics and abused by some who claim Jesus as Lord, we have a faith that gives us purpose, direction, joy, and hope - if we open our hearts, minds, and eyes to be witnesses of this faith. Our faith begins in prayer and worship; in praise and thanksgiving - each Sabbath day. As you know, each Sunday throughout the year is meant to be a celebration of Christ's resurrection. Each Sabbath is meant to be filled with joy and the abundance of God's love and grace. **(Continued on Page 2)**

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Byers Lot, Capital Campaign to Move Forward

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister

With a great crowd in attendance after our joint worship service, our Annual Congregational Meeting on January 31 was lively and exciting. We passed the 2010 budget with an amendment from the floor presented by Wib Smith that we look at cost-of-living raises and merit increases for the staff. We filled 33 of 34 positions for the 2010 Council (Parish Life unfilled). This new configuration of the Council follows the November special congregational meeting vote on the constitution, which essentially doubled the size of the Council.

The most exciting moment came when Bob Kutschbach, Tom Stewart, Anne Hudson, Wally **(Concluded on Page 3)**

From the Pastors

Don't Forget Those Resolutions

By the Rev. Dr. Janine Wilson, Associate Minister



I'm not one who usually makes New Year's resolutions, but I was reminded a day or two ago that for those who do, the year is already a month old . . . and so are the resolutions.

The two people who brought this to my attention were laughing as they reflected on how well they were (or were not) doing. Whether we join the secular calendar and playfully attempt to make changes in our life or not, we are challenged as Christians to reflect and consider making changes.

We tend to call it reflecting on our journey of faith, discernment, or maybe looking for the crossroad of our faith and life. Where we are going? What we are doing? How tightly do our faith and life intertwine?

Reflecting and redefining is part of our shared tradition all twelve months of the year. For us, every day is a day filled with new possibilities. Are there things we need to confess, give up or let go? Are there people or activities we would do well to include instead of exclude? What are you seeing in your life this second month of the New Year?

Since I've not had a chance to meet most of you personally yet, I find myself wondering, how you are doing with your resolutions? Borrowing the language of a former time and melody, I ask, "Is it well with your soul?"

And since I've just used a bit of church vocabulary, how comfortable or awkward are you in seeking God's will? Does it feel natural or strange to use such direct language? Do you enter your times of discernment playfully or prayerfully? Do you examine your faith through stories of life or stories from the Bible or both?

Wherever you are, whatever the language or process you prefer, I look forward to learning where your joys and tears are meeting the needs of the world. And for me, this second month of the year, I'm very happy that God and First Congregational Church have given me the opportunity to be your new Associate Minister. I hope you will make time to stop by and share your resolutions.

Need to find out about an event at First Church?

Go to the News page at www.first-church.org and click on Church Calendar to find out what, when and where

(Rev. Ahrens, Concluded from Page 1)

That is why it is so wonderful to be in worship together - to celebrate the Good News of Christ's life in our lives. When we come together to glorify God's name and delight in God's will for our lives, we approach a fulfillment of Sabbath. Coming together in worship shapes our individual lives in a communal setting. This is an exciting faith lived fully and properly!

On Ash Wednesday, February 17, at noon and 7:30 p.m., we enter one of the great times of our exciting faith, the season of Lent. I invite you to enter fully into the love of God as you come to worship at First Church. Rev. Wilson and I have prepared a sermon series, *An Exciting Faith*, for Lent and Easter.

As you enter this day, this week, this Lent, may you discover more ways to live the Sabbath properly and fully with purpose, prayer and expectation.

2010 Lent/Easter Sermon Series

An Exciting Faith . . .



2/17 – Ash Wednesday –

An Exciting Faith Finds a Home – Rev. Ahrens

2/21 – 1st Lenten Sunday - . . . *Brings Friendship in the Wilderness* – Rev. Ahrens – Luke 4:1-13

2/28 – 2nd Lenten Sunday - . . . *Creates a Just Community* – Rev. Wilson – Luke: 13-31-35

3/7 – 3rd Lenten Sunday - . . . *Admits Mistakes* – Rev. Ahrens – Luke 13:1-9

3/14 – 4th Lenten Sunday - . . . *Embraces Love* – Rev. Ahrens – Luke 15:1-3; 11b-32

3/21 – 5th Lenten Sunday - . . . *Finds Gratitude in Serving* – Rev. Wilson – John 12:1-8

3/28 – Palm/Passion Sunday - . . . *Gives Selflessly* – Rev. Ahrens

4/1 – Maundy Thursday – Dinner 6 p.m.; Communion 7 p.m.; Tenebrae Service 7:30 p.m.

4/4 – Easter Sunday - . . . *Takes Joyful Risks* – Rev. Ahrens – Luke 24-12 (Services 7, 9 and 11 a.m.)

New First Church Council Ready to Go to Work in 2010

By Melody Leidheiser, Moderator

Thank you to all the outgoing council members who served so faithfully in 2009! Leaving the council are Phil Stichter, Duan Cannon, Kim Kutschbach, Pavan Peter, Diana Kutschbach, Amy Fulton, Bill Rhoades, Nancy Fields, Charlie Weaver, Carol Gallagher and Joyce Oyler. (If you could please turn your notebooks in to the church office as soon as possible, we will recycle them for 2010 use!)

Your support and input has been invaluable and the congregation has been blessed with your dedication and service. Without your attendance and many hours at committee meetings etc. the work of the church could not have been completed in such an organized manner.



Calendar Items:

The Executive Committee meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Parish Family Room.

The Council meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Large Conference Room.

Council training will be held Sunday, February 28, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

I'd like to welcome the returning and new council members: Sandy Bennett, Doug Buck, Diane Cole, Frank Cook, John Deliman, Priss Endo, Jim Fewless, Wally Giffen, David Holt, Anne Hudson, Chuck Kelley, Jordan Knerr, Jane Leidheiser, Nancy Loy, Vince Papsidero, Sarah Reed, Judy Smith, Gerry Worth, Kevin Butler, Patrick Keller, Julia Myers and Carolyn Watkins.

Your first council meeting will be Tuesday, February 16, at 7 p.m. Please bring your contact information so that we may update our roster or email Melody Leidheiser at mbleidheiser@yahoo.com with that information. We are looking forward to an exciting year at First Church!

Generosity Appreciated: First Church received letters of thanks recently for our contributions to two important local groups. One was from Laura Stillman, Heart to Heart coordinator at First Community Church. She thanked us for the cookies and tins that were donated to Heart to Heart for needy families at the holidays. We also received a big thanks from Peggy Anderson of the Columbus AIDS Task Force for our generous contribution of \$968 to the task force in 2009. We can be proud of our support for such worthy organizations.

Children of Abraham Series Returns

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister

On four Wednesday nights in March, over 50 Muslims, Christians and Jews will gather again for prayer, study, and fellowship. We will gather from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in synagogue, mosque, church and restaurant (Mad Greek)! We want you to join us for some or all of the evenings of study, prayer, laughter, learning and growth in relationships.

Under the teachings of Imam Hany Saqr, Rabbi Michael Ungar and myself, *The Children of Abraham: A Study of Genesis* will explore Genesis 16-25. Here are the topics and locations for the month:

March 3 - *The Birth of Ishmael - Genesis 16* - Congregation Tifereth Israel, 1354 East Broad St. (Park in the back).

March 10 - *Sodom and Gomorrah - Genesis 18-19* - First Congregational Church, Parish Hall, 444 East Broad St.

March 17 - *The Birth, Binding and Sacrifice of Isaac - Genesis 21-22* - The Islamic Cultural Center, 5100 Wilcox Rd., Dublin.

March 24 - *The Death of Sarah and Abraham - Genesis 23, 24, 25* - Mad Greek Restaurant, 4210 E. Broad St.

Bring spouses, partners, friends, neighbors, children, and co-workers. Please sign up in the church office so we can plan our food for each week. If you have questions, contact me 228-1741, ext. 13, or tahrens@first-church.org.

(Annual Meeting, Concluded from Page 1)

Giffen and David Holt presented the plan to purchase the Byers Lot on the corner of Cleveland Avenue and Broad Street (\$2.75 million purchase price, with an additional \$450,000 of improvements – \$3.2 million), to repair and upgrade our current building (\$1.09 million) and add over \$261,000 to our mission partnerships in the coming five years.

We will raise over \$4.75 million to increase our mission and ministry in the heart of Columbus! By a vote of 93%, the congregation stepped forward in faith. In the coming weeks, much more will be heard from Tom Stewart, chairperson for the campaign, and Russ Kelm and Sheldon Taft, lead gifts co-chairs and the committees and leadership now coming together around this capital campaign. We commend all those who have worked so hard over the past four years to get us to this point. We celebrate everyone in our congregation and community who will help us reach our goals and vision.

UCC Summer Camp Catalog Is Now Available

By Mark S. Williams, Christian Education Director

Think Spring!



If the Outdoor Ministries Summer Camp Catalog has arrived, can spring be far behind? Everyone is ready to plan some fun in the sun and that's just what camp is. The campers enjoy swimming, hiking, crafts, games, singing and worship. They have camp fires, vespers, rest time, and make friends that last a lifetime. They

learn and grow in their faith.

There are camps for Kindergarten and First Graders with a grandparent. Weeklong camps are for children who have completed the second grade and older. There are camps for teens and camps with themes. There are camps for adults, and even one for families.

Here is something new this year about registration. The registration can be done online by going to this link: <http://www.ocucc.org/outdoormin/Summer%20Camp/SummerCampSchedule.htm> In fact, the entire camp schedule is online.

First Congregational Church has always been a strong supporter of the Outdoor Ministries Summer Camp Program by encouraging participation and by offering scholarships for campers. Thanks to the generosity of longtime member Alma Keeler, we are able to offer a 50% camp scholarship on the early registration fee (after \$75 deposit) to any First Church child or youth who wants to go to camp.

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

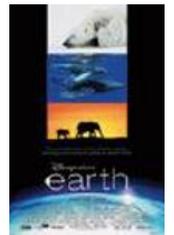
1. Decide which camp you want to attend;
2. Send in your \$75 deposit as soon as possible with the 2010 Camp Registration Form. Forms can be found in the back of the catalog, in the church office or online (see link above);
3. Complete the Campership Request form found in a holder in the Church Office (Deadline is March 31) and return to Mark Williams;
4. Send the remaining amount owed to the Ohio Conference at least two weeks prior to your camp;
5. Have a wonderful time! Due to the increase in camp registration this year, First Church will offer additional scholarships for those families who need extra help. Any child who wants to go to camp should not be stopped due to financial concerns of the family.

For more information about camp, please contact Mark S. Williams. Deadline for early registration and campership request is March 31.

March MNL to Discuss *Earth* March 1, 7 p.m.

This is an epic story of adventure, starring some of the most magnificent and courageous creatures alive, awaits you in *Earth*. Disneynature brings you a remarkable story of three animal families on a journey across our plane – polar bears, elephants and humpback whales.

Filmed with spectacular clarity and beauty, *Earth* is both majestic and intimate as it captures rare footage of nature's wildest and most elusive animals. From the landmark Disneynature collection, *Earth* is an astonishing and heartwarming film filled with adventure, suspense and humor that will take your breath away. The movie discussion will be led by the Rev. Tim Ahrens and the Sacred Earth Committee will be hosting a dinner prior to the movie at 6 p.m.



This movie series is part of First Church's Sacred Conversations. For information, visit our Web site at www.first-church.org or contact Mark S. Williams, Director of Christian Education at 614.228.1741, ext. 15.

Mark Your Calendars: The Monday Night Lights spring movie on April 5 will be *Saved!*

Lenten Resources

Lenten resources for children, families and adults are available at the entrance to the worship space and in classrooms. A Lenten children's activities calendar is available and is perfect to display on a refrigerator or a family bulletin board.

Where in the World is God? 40 Days of Devotions for Today's World is a new booklet of prayers, scriptures and reflections for each day of Lent. *From Fear to Love* by Henri Nouwen also is an individual devotion booklet for the days of Lent. Please pick up a copy at either service or in the church office.

Spring Retreat

Mark on your calendar now for the Spring Retreat. This year the retreat is April 23-25 at Temple Hills. More information will be in next month's newsletter.

From the Music Office

By James E. Bobb, Music Minister

Understanding Lent and Holy Week as a single unit within an Easter context can greatly enrich our spiritual renewal. In my years serving Lutheran parishes I found the liturgical practices most instructive.



After the fun and pancakes of Shrove Tuesday, the little rite called the Banishment of Alleluia formalized and helped explain the traditional restraint from certain celebrative gestures. The text gave the congregation one last opportunity to indulge in Alleluia's: Alleluia. Enclose and seal up the word, alleluia. Let it remain in

the secret of your heart, alleluia, until the appointed time. You shall say it with great joy when that day comes. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Much of the following is drawn from Phillip H. Pfatteicher's *Manual on the Liturgy (Lutheran Book of Worship)*.

The central event of the Christian faith is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That unitive event of cross and resurrection is the core of the apostolic preaching; it is also the central celebration of the church's liturgy. It is set forth in Holy Communion and in the daily prayer of morning and evening. It is the focus of the church year: Lent prepares for it, and the great Fifty Days are a celebration of it.

More specifically, Lent is the preparation for the celebration of the mystery of redemption; Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil, and the Fifty Days are the proclamation and celebration of it. It is one event, seen from two sides: cross and resurrection, each incomplete without the other.

The spirit of Ash Wednesday is most solemn, close to that of the Jewish Day of Atonement. The Ash Wednesday liturgy marks the beginning of a penitential discipline which climaxes in the absolution and peace of the Maundy Thursday liturgy.

Penitential acts should be related to restoration and to spiritual and moral growth, as the derivation of the word "Lent" suggests. "Lent" is from an Angle-Saxon word meaning "springtime" and so it to be understood as the holy springtime of the soul, a time for preparation, planting, and growth.

Ash Wednesday includes an extended confession of sins, the absolution of which is deferred until Maundy

Thursday. Ashes are an extraordinarily rich symbol rooted in ancient customs and practices. Ashes, in a Jewish and Christian context, suggest judgment and God's condemnation of sin; frailty, our total dependence upon God for life; humiliation; and repentance.

We are reminded forcefully of the words of the committal in the burial service, ". . . earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." For one day, those words will be said over us. Moreover, ashes suggest cleansing and renewal. They were once used as a cleansing agent in the absence of soap, and on Ash Wednesday the ashes have sometimes been understood as a penitential substitute for water as a sign of baptism, a primary emphasis of Lent. Water both stifles and refreshes, drowns and makes alive; so the ashes also tell of both death and renewal. A further example of death and renewal shown by ashes is the ancient custom of burning the fields in the spring to destroy the old and to prepare for the new.

Music Notes

March 7, 4 p.m.

First Church Choral Society

This event is dedicated in joyful thanksgiving for the interim ministry of music of Marti Rideout at First Congregational Church from 2008-2009. James E. Bobb leads the Choral Society in a hymn festival with organ improvisations, brass, choral repertoire featuring John Rutter's Gloria, and the singing of hymns new and old by everyone.

Compline

Join us for at 9 p.m. on the third Sunday of each month for a candlelight service of Compline. This sung service of night prayer is followed by an organ improvisation on the Kimball organ. Upcoming dates are **February 21, March 21, April 18 and May 16.**

Tuesdays at First, 12:15 p.m.

March 2 – Daniel Fortune, organist-choirmaster of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Akron plays the Kimball organ.

March 9 – Boel Gidholm, baroque violinist from Rochester, N.Y., joins James Bobb at the harpsichord in the music of C.P.E. Bach and Mozart.

March 16 – Soprano Lynne Roseberry and organist G. Dene Barnard present music of Leo Sowerby and others.

March 23 – Organist and violist Matthew Scavo of Columbus.

First Church News

First Church Staff News

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister

The last month has seen some exciting new developments for our staff.

On February 1, the Rev. Dr. Janine Wilson joined our staff as Associate Minister.



Following a two-year interim with the Rev. Barbara Cunningham, we are delighted to welcome Janine to our church family. She brings close to 20 years of pastoral leadership having

served small, medium and large congregations in a variety of rural, suburban and urban locations.

Janine also served as a "Pastor to Pastors" in the second-largest presbytery in the United States. She was raised in the Moravian Church in Florida and ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Janine was received fully into the United Church of Christ as a pastor and teacher on January 20. She is married to the Rev. Matthew Wilson, a UCC pastor at First Congregational Church, Radnor, Ohio. They have a wonderfully-blended family of five children and three grandchildren.

Stan Parron, our Building and Grounds Manager, recently resigned, effective February 19. He has worked in this position since May 2007. We will miss Stan and the many gifts he brought to our church. He is relocating to Panama City, Fla. Please take time to let Stan know how you feel about his service to our church. Rev. Wilson and Wally Giffen have narrowed the search for Stan's replacement to seven candidates. We will share the news with you as soon as it is official.

Mark Williams and Sharon Leidheiser had health challenges in the last month and a half, but both are doing better now, and please keep them in your prayers. Denny Mahoney just returned from vacationing in the Caribbean. Marty Worth is celebrating the birth of twin grandchildren, Ian and Zoe, in December. Jamie Bobb was in Rochester, N.Y. for a concert at the end of January and is preparing the choirs for an exciting season ahead.

I will be gone February 22-27. I will be in at the Presbyterian Louisville Theological Seminary in Kentucky part of that time as preparation for my sabbatical this summer to Spain, Morocco, Israel, the West Bank and Egypt. I also will fly to Lincoln, Neb., to be with my parents and sister as we visit my aunt and uncle, Janice and the Rev. Dr. Clip Higgins, in these challenging days of Janice's battle against cancer. I will return for February 28 worship.

March 9 Retreat Offered at Pilgrim Hills

"A Day with God and Self," a day-long retreat for educators, clergy and laity offering an opportunity for individual and group spiritual guidance, will be held March 9, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the UCC Ohio Conference's Pilgrim Hills Prettyman Center.

The leaders will be Janet Burkhart, a licensed minister and retired director of Christian Education at Trinity UCC, Wooster, Ohio, and Shirley Weyrauch, Christian education coordinator at Christ Church UCC in Orrville, Ohio.

The costs is \$30. If you plan to arrive the night before, there will be an additional \$40 charge for lodging. Please check with the Ohio Conference office about availability of breakfast on the date you have in mind. If breakfast is not available, you can bring and prepare your own food in Prettyman Center's fully-equipped kitchen.

Registration must be received two weeks before the retreat date. Call the Ohio Conference office at 800-282-0740 to request a brochure or you can print a registration form at www.ocucc.org to complete and return with your check.

Lantern Fellowship Set For April 16-18

The next Lantern Fellowship retreat of the Ohio



Conference UCC will be held April 16 to 18 at the Pilgrim Hills Camp and Conference Center near Brinkhaven, Ohio. The cost is \$135.

The main speaker will be the Rev. Wendy Schindler-Chasney pastor of St. John's UCC in Milan, Ohio.

Lantern Fellowship is an adult retreat offered to the women of the UCC Ohio Conference. It is a time when women, ranging in age from 25 to 80 plus years, come together to enjoy good food, warm and friendly hospitality and the peaceful, quiet beauty of wooded hills and trails can renew the spirit.

The uplifting company of other women is inspiring. Lantern women have gathered away from home and church responsibilities for a time of community, worship, spiritual renewal and learning since 1928.

First Church News

Arts Festival Planning Under Way

By Anne Hudson and Deb Anderson, Arts Festival Committee

This is the third year we celebrate our presence in the Discovery District's Arts Festival. On June 4, people from all around the region will have a chance to learn about First Congregational Church as they walk the festival routes. I'm calling on YOU to volunteer in some capacity in order to highlight our music, art and spirit to the world as it arrives at our back doors the first weekend in June!



Committee meetings have begun each Wednesday at noon. Join us whenever you can and call Anne Hudson at 614-879-6667 if you would like to attend.

We'll have the Tea Room again supporting a charity. New this year will be an art exhibition featuring the artworks of our congregants and friends of First Church. The exhibition will run from early May until after the festival. You can sign up to volunteer by sending an email to fcaf444@gmail.com.

Trustees Increase Number in 2010

By Phil Stichter, Past Chair

With the adoption of various amendments to the church constitution this past November, the number of voting trustees has been increased from seven to nine.

By virtue of the elections recently held at our congregational meeting January 31, the 2010 voting trustees are: Wally Giffen and Carolyn Watkins (terms expire in 2011); Joyce Canfield and Matt Lazar (terms expire in 2012); Sue Cook and Randy Hoffman (terms expire in 2013); Lissa Wade and Tom Worley (terms expire in 2014); and Melody Leidheiser (elected as church moderator).

The trustees have selected Carolyn Watkins as it chair. Advisors to the trustees are the senior minister (Tim Ahrens), the treasurer (Bill Johannes) and legal counsel and secretary (Meredith Kneuve). The positions of treasurer and legal counsel are selected annually by the trustees. David Holt, church treasurer, will continue to attend trustee meetings in an informal capacity.

The primary responsibilities of the trustees as set forth in the church constitution are:

1. Respect and carry out the intentions of the donors.
2. Wisely invest and manage funds.
3. Insure the church against liability and our building and contents.
4. Encourage new contributions.
5. Coordinate with the Council in long-range planning.

The funds held by the trustees have been and continue to be a vital resource for both planned and unexpected needs of the church. Please consider and plan how you wish to impact the future of this church through an endowment or a special gift.

Please contact a trustee if you would like further information concerning an existing endowment fund's purposes, would like to make a special gift, or would like to designate the church as a beneficiary in your estate plans. We, the congregation, are the beneficiaries of those who gave in the past and your forthcoming gifts are important now and for our future.

Sacred Earth to Host MNL Dinner

The Sacred Earth Committee is offering a simple meal prior to the March 1 Monday Night Lights movie. Join us in the Fellowship Hall at 6 p.m. for a simple dinner of soup, salad and dessert before the discussion of the movie *Earth*.



This movie, narrated by James Earl Jones, tells the remarkable story of three animal families and their amazing journey across the planet we all call home. There will be a signup sheet in the office. A cash donation of \$5 is requested and will go to Sacred Earth's Greening of the Church fund, or individuals can purchase a \$10 tote bag and receive a free dinner.

A Thank-You to Sacred Earth: The House and Grounds Committee would like to thank the Sacred Earth Committee for the donation of more than \$700. The funds are going to lighting in the Education Wing to replace the ballast transformer unit with a fluorescent lighting fixture and power savings ballast that is thermal protected. This will prevent fires and make it more economical and efficient to operate. – **Bill Wirsching, House and Grounds.**

First Church Connects With Children at Deep Griha

By Fran Panek, Mission Committee

First Church has had a long and loving relationship with the Onawale family and the children at the Deep Griha mission in Pune, India.

Through the generosity of our congregation, we were able to sponsor five children at Deep Griha in 2009. In January we received letters from the children and decided it would be fun to respond with letters to them on February 14. Members of the Mission Committee gathered in the Parish Hall after worship to share the pictures drawn by the students and offer members of First Church the opportunity to write a brief note to the children.



We want to say "THANK YOU!" to all who participated in this project! If you missed this opportunity and would still like to participate, please feel free to contact Fran Panek at franpan2000@yahoo.com. We

will see that the letters get delivered to the children at the City of Child and look forward to another season of sponsorship for "our kids" in India.

Shown are some of the drawings sent to us. Look on the Mission bulletin Board for the full collection! God Bless!

Kitchen Items Needed for Immigrant Families

The Missions Committee is beginning a collaborative project with Community Refugee Immigration Service (CRIS) to collect kitchen items for new families being resettled in Columbus.

Project Welcome Basket will collect specific items needed by families starting a new life in our city. Members of the First Church Missions Committee will deliver items to CRIS where staff members will assemble the baskets and make them available to newcomers.

Organizing Our Justice Ministry Network

By Priss Endo

How can I get involved in social justice ministry at First Church? How does our church participate with other congregations in Columbus to give power to the powerless?

To answer these questions, you are invited to a presentation on the Social Justice Network at First Church on March 8 at 7 p.m. Rev. Ahrens and members of the First Church BREAD team will lead us in an agenda addressing the biblical call to justice, how the justice network operates and goals of the network for 2010.

All church members are welcome at this meeting as we learn how to be a part of First Church's social justice tradition, and find out how the Social Justice Network is empowering its members to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our Lord."

Cum Christo Weekends Coming Up

You are invited to participate in an experiential weekend of Christian learning and renewal by attending Cum Christo.

The March 11-14 men's weekend and April 22-25 women's weekend currently are accepting applications. Future weekends in 2010 include men (October 14-17) and women (November 4-7).

Contact Paul Flocken (614-403-4910) or Arlene Reynolds (arlene@aol.com) to learn more about the Cursillo method of piety, study, action and group reunion.

Email Need Updating? Let Us Know

In order to better serve you, we need to make sure we have your latest email address. If you need to update the address, call the office (228-1741) or email us at home@first-church.org. Also let us know if we need to change the designation in our records for the email you prefer us to use in contacting you.

Mission Offerings Schedule

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

March 7 - BREAD

March 14 - SARA

March 21 - Downtowners

March 28 - One Great Hour of Sharing



Recent Gifts to First Church

By Bill Johannes and Jane Werum



Given to the Jackie Owen Memorial Music Fund and the Alma Keeler Youth Fund by:
The Estate of Amy Allen

Given to the Buel Family Fund in celebration of the life of Marguerite Buel by:
Patricia Patterson

Given to the Barnard Music Endowment Fund in honor of G. Dene Barnard by:
Kevin Ayres

Given to the Remembrance Fund in celebration of the life of Barbara Heer by:
Charles and Eleanor Hyatt

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

First Thursday Fellowship Set For March 4

Happy New Year! The First Thursday Fellowship will have its next meeting on Thursday, March 4, at 10 a.m., at Essie Cannon's house, 5910 Whitman Rd.

The Rev. Janine Wilson, our new associate minister, will be the guest speaker. So, please plan on coming and bring a friend!

Second Thursday Group to Meet March 11

The March meeting of the Second Thursday Fellowship will be held March 11.

The speaker will be the Rev. Janine Wilson, associate minister. Refreshments will be served at 10 a.m. Come and join us.

Member Happy March Birthdays

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1: Jen Riley-Williamson | 16: Luke Zimmerman |
| 1: Emily Kutschbach | 16: Will Zimmerman |
| 2: Sheldon Taft | 17: Ashley Gover |
| 3: Gerhardt Wolff | 18: Megan Daniels |
| 3: Bruce Panek | 19: Darla Luebbe |
| 4: Julie Roth-Alexander | 19: Kelvin Murphy |
| 5: Phil Stichter | 19: Austin Wharton |
| 5: Anna Jensen | 20: Tom Worley |
| 5: Nicholas Warrick | 20: David Mailer |
| 5: Hank Schaab | 20: Erin Johnson |
| 6: Shirley Calhoun | 20: Brett Bachman |
| 6: Tom Endo | 21: Dorothy Horn |
| 7: Bob Monahan | 21: James Gaugh |
| 7: Christina Kirker | 21: Eric Ewing |
| 7: Andrew Smith | 22: James Powell |
| 7: Meagan Daniels | 22: Kerry O'Leary |
| 8: Gretchen Atkinson | 23: Laura White |
| 9: Doug Buck | 24: Amy Wagner |
| 9: Michael Weaver | 24: Paige Rochus |
| 9: Michelle Winberry | 25: Ted Endo |
| 9: Heather Giffen | 26: Catherine Kennedy |
| 9: Joel Bishop | 27: John Firebaugh |
| 11: Candy Cummings | 27: Jim Drotleff |
| 11: Allison Lange | 28: Judith Hunter |
| 12: Barbara Ritter | 28: Margene Whittenburg |
| 12: Jenny Provenzano | 28: Bryce Millikin |
| 12: Lincoln Glaros | 29: Thomas Mitchell |
| 13: Tami Fields | 29: Will Kennedy |
| 13: Ella Koscher | 30: Ruth Allred |
| 16: Beth Kochman-Wilson | 31: Jennifer Newhouse |
| 16: Rob O'Leary | 31: Donna Coe |
| 16: Emma Anderson | 31: Malini Gnanatheeban |
| | 31: Katie Gies |

Member Happy March Anniversaries

- | |
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| 1: Ellen and Peter Boriin |
| 9: Cynthia Burnell and Quentin Potter |
| 11: Jill and Dana Paulus |
| 14: Sarah and Jon Frank |
| 14: Janet Stoneking and Eric Boyd |
| 16: Charlie and Mike Knerr |
| 16: Aimee and Tom Cerny |
| 18: Tammy Alexander and Julie Roth-Alexander |
| 18: Deanna and Andre Griffin |
| 18: Melissa Murdock-Weygandt and Nate Weygandt |
| 21: Sadie and Brian Oldham |
| 26: Anne and Rick Bennett |
| 28: Diane Cole and John Rau |
| 30: Heidi and Andrew Rowley |

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

Church Calendar

Sunday, February 21

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
9 pm – Compline – San

Monday, February 22

6:30 pm - Stephen Ministers – Adult Library

Tuesday, February 23

12:00 pm – Card Care Ministry – LC
7 pm – Personnel Committee – LC

Wednesday, February 24

12:00p – Arts Festival Committee – PFR

Thursday, February 25

6:15 pm – First Church Ringers – Music Activity Room
7:15 pm – Choral Society – PH
7:30 pm – First Church Choir – Choir Room

Saturday, February 27

9 am – Faith Mission Family Shelter Lunches

Sunday, February 28 (New Members Join)

9 am – Early Worship – PH
9 am – Treble Choir – Choir Room
10 am - Education Hour
11 am – Worship Service – San
12 pm - Fellowship Hour – PH
6 pm – Youth Groups – PH

Monday, March 1

5:30 pm – Sacred Earth – PFR
7 pm – Monday Night Lights – PH

Tuesday, March 2

11 am – Tuesdays at First Book Study – LC
12:15 pm - Tuesdays at First Concert – San
12:45 pm – Tuesdays at First Luncheon – PH
1:30 pm – Card Care Ministry – LC
6:30 pm – Children’s Education – Ed. Wing Room C
7 pm – Mission Committee – LC
7 pm – Deacons – PFR
7:30 pm – Youth Ministry – Room C

Wednesday, March 3

11 am – Book Study – LC
12:00 pm – Arts Festival Committee – PFR
7 pm – Genesis Study
7 pm – Church Growth – PFR

Thursday, March 4

10 am – First Thursday Fellowship
7 pm – Choral Society – PH
6:15 pm – First Church Ringers – Bell Room
7:30 p.m. – First Church Choir – Choir Room

Sunday, March 7

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
12:30 pm - Confirmation Class – Room D
4 pm – Congregational Concert - San

Monday, March 8

7 pm – Trustees – PFR

Tuesday, March 9

11 am – Tuesdays at First Book Study – LC
12:15 pm - Tuesdays at First Concert – San
12:45 pm – Tuesdays at First Luncheon – PH
1:30 pm – Card Care Ministry – PFR
6 pm – Music Committee – PR
7 pm – Executive Committee – PFR

Wednesday, March 10

12:00 pm – Arts Festival Committee – PFR
7:00 pm – Genesis Study

Thursday, March 11

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

Saturday, March 13

10 am – First Church Quilters – LC

Sunday, March 14

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
6 pm – Youth Groups – PH

Tuesday, March 16

11 am – Tuesdays at First Book Study – LC
12:15 pm - Tuesdays at First Concert – San
12:45 pm – Tuesdays at First Luncheon – PH
1:30 pm – Card Care Ministry – LC
7 pm – Council – LC

Wednesday, March 17

11 am – Book Study – PR
12 pm – Arts Festival Committee – PFR
7:00 pm – Genesis Study

Thursday, March 18

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

Sunday, March 21

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
12:30 pm - Confirmation Class – Room D
9 pm – Compline – San

To All Our First Church Friends: Gunter and I would like to thank you all for your prayers, cards, visits, food, books and phone calls, which kept us going while I was off my feet. It helped immensely and we are so grateful for your kindness. – **Sarah Garbe**

Prayers



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.

Fellowship Hour Beverage Sales



Coffee and tea sales will be available on March 7 and 21 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

March Fellowship Hour

- March 7: Psalms
- March 14: Romans
- March 21: Ruth
- March 28: Samuel

March Acolyte Schedule

- March 7: Joe Spofforth and Katie Wagner
 - March 14: Adam Wade and Jansen Allred
 - March 21: Will Zimmerman and Katie Gies
 - March 28: Jansen Allred and Ben Allred
- (Schedules online at www.first-church.org)

Next Newsletter Deadline

Articles Due: Monday, March 8, 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.

Church Staff

- Timothy C. Ahrens.....Senior Minister
- Janine Wilson.....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, Eric Trepkoski.....Custodians
- 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
- Trish Bishop, Judy Smith.....Secretary/Assistant
- David Holt, Jim Fewlass.....Treasurer/Assistant
- Frank Cook, Sandy Bennett.....Administration/Assistant
- Wayne Piper, Chuck Kelley.....Church Growth/Assistant
- Diane Cole, Priss Endo.....Education/Assistant
- Wally Giffen, Vince Papsidero..House & Grounds/Assistant
- Anne Hudson, Patrick Keller.....Mission/Assistant
- Julia Myers.....Parish Life
- Carolyn Watkins.....Trustees
- Gerry Worth.....Senior Deacon
- Kevin Butler.....Deacon
- Jane Leidheiser, John Deliman..Music, Arts, Heritage/Ast.
- Nancy Loy.....Nominating Chair
- Jordan Knerr.....Member-at-large
- Doug Buck.....Member-at-large

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

DATED MATERIAL - VERY IMPORTANT
Please Deliver: Monday, February 22, 2010

TO:

[Empty dashed box for recipient information]



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