

First Church News

First Congregational Church, UCC
Columbus, Ohio

"Enter to Worship - Depart to Serve"

February
2012
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Have You Ever Been Thrown Out of Church?

By The Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister
(tahrens@first-church.org)

In 1997, a young man came to me in fear and trembling. He had started coming to worship but was afraid to commit to membership. We were an Open and Affirming church and spoke of God's extravagant welcome. Nevertheless, this young man was worried that we "were not for real." I told him, *"What you see is what you get. This is really who we are."*



After a long conversation in which we laughed and cried about his journey, he asked, *"Will you baptize me?"* I hesitated, knowing that he had been very active in his last church. He had been baptized. But he had been driven out of church by the pastor. One Sunday during worship, the pastor "outed" him in front of his wife and children while preaching the Sunday sermon. *He said, "My pastor told me I was evil and that my baptism wasn't real. He threw me out of church and took away my baptism."*

Related story on Page 2

I was shocked. I could not imagine being thrown out of church, especially the way it had happened. Moreover, I was angry at the audacity of a pastor to "take away" baptism. Baptism is a graceful gift from God. It is not "owned" by the pastor of any church. I believed this man's baptism wasn't "true" because of the baptizer, not the baptizand. Shortly after this, we welcomed him into our church through the sacrament of baptism.

Since then, I have heard too many other horror stories about men and women being cast out of church by pastors who are anti-gay. In the United Church of Christ, we claim to be extravagant in our welcome. For many of our churches, this is true. However, it is not true everywhere in our denomination. Not every UCC church is Open and Affirming.

First Congregational UCC is a special community of faith. At First Church, we do our best to live into our Open and Affirming statement. We welcome people no matter who they are or where they are on life's journey. In September, we will lift up and celebrate our 160 years of extravagant welcome. We also will celebrate our 10 years as an Open and Affirming church in September.

Be joyful and celebrate God's glorious welcome in our community in of faith. Bring your friends. Bring your family. Bring your neighbors. Bring yourselves to our church. If you know anyone who has been thrown out or felt left out of church, bring him or her. We have a place for them in our family of faith.

Everyone is welcome here! I cannot wait to see you in church!

Lenten Small Groups Begin Soon

Joyfully we step into Lent in a few weeks. Last year, 115 people participated in 12 small groups. Our theme for 2011 was "prayer." As we prepare for the arrival of Dr. Walter Brueggemann in May, we will use his book *Great Prayers of the Old Testament* this year.

The small groups will meet four or five times throughout late February and March. Each small group meeting will be 60-90 minutes. We hope that every member takes time to join with others in their community to pray, study and grow in relationship with God and one another.

– Rev. Tim

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Ready . . . Set . . . Take Part and Grow

By the Rev. Dr. Janine Wilson, Associate Minister
(jwilson@first-church.org)

One of my favorite parts of every new year is the energy and freshness that emerges in the training of new commissioners. Many feel awkward with introductions, but once it begins, the sound is joyous and the questions keep things lively throughout.



It is fun to lend a hand to prepare them for their church leadership for the year. I like the first meeting of every group I attend as well. Meetings are, after all, nothing more or less than small groups of members becoming friends. There is always some curiosity and hope, and again, the opportunity to get acquainted with people in a different way. We know a little more about God and ourselves when we get to know others.

All of our commissions welcome new participants into their groups/commissions – you do not need to be elected to participate. (The leaders were elected by you, now they need you to make yourself available to engage in some mischief with them.) Your heart, voice, ideas, laughter and prayer are all wanted and welcome. Each month we will have a bulletin insert to help you find ways to become involved

One of the things that many appreciate is that you do not have to sign up for an extended time on a commission. We welcome you to even share in just one task, one time, or one project. When I was a kid my grandmother often reminded me that “many hands make light work.” She was right; and many hearts together also bring joy into the room, into the church and out into the world – one person, one opportunity, one commission at a time.

So this year, this month, this week, take a risk – enter your name on the top left of the bulletin insert and let us know where your joy might be willing to reach out and meet a need in the church or world. In the end, it’s your call.

With joy, Janine

‘It’s About Time’

Sermon Series on Homosexuality Set for February 12 and 19

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister

The greatest sign of a healthy church in the 21st century is our unconditional welcome of all people. First Church is a healthy church. We welcome everyone “no matter who they are or where they are on life’s journey.”

Unfortunately, in too many places in the Christian communion across the globe, there is an unhealthy truth - gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgender persons are not welcome.

I was touched deeply at Lessons and Carols in December when a woman approached me and thanked me for a sermon I had preached 20 years ago. It was a sermon about unconditional welcome to her as a lesbian Christian. She said, “I still carry that sermon around.”

It has been six years since I have specifically addressed questions about LGBT issues from the pulpit of First Church. That is too long! Too often, you and I take it for granted that we are an Open and Affirming church. It is part of the fabric of our faith and our life together. Nevertheless, I feel a strong need to preach on how the Bible and the Church deal with homosexuality.

This month, I will preach for two weeks on the issues of homosexuality in the Bible and in the universal church. Spread the word! Bring your children, friends and family. Bring your neighbors and colleagues who belong to churches where LGBT folks are not welcome.

Mark your calendars - February 12 and 19 will be the two-part sermon series “It’s About Time.” **February 12** is Part I of II: “Homosexuality and the Bible: No More Bible Beatings Allowed!” **February 19** is Part II of II: “Homosexuality and the Church: A 21st Century Transfiguration Story!”

Read Sermons
On Line at
www.first-church.org

February Music Notes

By James E. Bobb, Minister of Music
(jbobb@first-church.org)

First Tuesdays

February 7, 12:15 p.m.

Robert Wisniewski, principal organist and assistant director of music at St. Joseph Cathedral. 12:15 recitals on the first Tuesday of each month are followed by homemade lunch at 12:45 (\$5 donation for lunch).



Compline

Sunday, February 19, 9 p.m.

The third Sunday of each month we offer a 30-minute service of Compline. This ancient order of worship consists of psalms, canticles, and night prayers all sung by candlelight concluding with an organ voluntary on the Kimball organ. This beautiful service is a peaceful oasis of prayer and calm.

Musical Drama

Shrove Tuesday, February 2, 7 p.m.

Moses and the Freedom Fanatics, presented by the Teen and Treble Choirs tells the story of Moses and the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt. This will be part of the Pancake Dinner the Youth will be hosting to bring the Epiphany season to a decadent close before Lent. Dinner is served 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. with the musical starting at 7. \$4 for adults and \$3 for children 12 and under.

Congregational Concert

February 26, 5 p.m.

(Note the later time for this concert)

Columbus International Children's Choir

Tatiana Kats director

The Children's Choir performs Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* with chamber ensemble, and shares the program with the First Church Choir.

Did you Know . . .

. . . that the Sanctuary flowers on Sunday are part of the ministry of First Church. Each Sunday, the Deacons make bouquets from the arrangement to deliver to those on the prayer list. If there has been a dedication, a bouquet is given to the family.

. . . that the Carrie Schumacher endowment fund provides \$1,000 for the flowers for the year.

. . . that the cost of the flowers each Sunday is \$63. The trustees fund can cover the cost of 15 Sundays. Easter and Christmas Sundays are special Sundays with dedications of lilies and poinsettias. Individuals and families dedicated flowers on 20 Sundays in 2011.



. . . that some families dedicate flowers yearly on a Sunday that holds significant meaning to them.

. . . that there are 53 Sundays in 2012. In order to have a fresh arrangement every Sunday that can then be given to people on the care and concern list, it is important that we have a dedication on **36 Sundays** this year. Please consider dedicating flowers in honor of or in memory of someone, or in celebration of a special occasion, as part of the ministry to our shut-ins and those on our prayer list.

. . . that there will be a flower chart in Parish Hall during the month of February for selecting a Sunday for **your** flower dedication.

. . . that you can call Marty Worth to sign up for a flower dedication at 228-1741, ext. 14, or email her at mworth@first-church.org. – **Marty Worth**

Thursday Fellowships Meet Feb. 2, 9

The First Thursday Fellowship will meet February 2 at 10 a.m. at Betsy Zahn's house, 2459 Sherwood Villa. The speaker will be Jackie Dean, who will discuss being a UCC commissioned minister.

At the Second Thursday Fellowship on February 9 in the Parlor, Sue and Frank Cook will present a program about their recent cultural-religious trip to Cuba. The program begins at 10 a.m. and all are welcome.

Make Plans for Observing This Lenten Season

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

Shrove Tuesday is February 21, the day before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent.

The term "Shrove" comes from "shriving" – to confess or repent and seek absolution. This was once a common practice on the day. We encourage all to plan activities that will help your family be ready for the solemn season ahead. First, have a family "game plan." Call a family meeting. Talk about what Lent means and why it is important. Discuss where, when and how to observe Lent together. For example, will you devote a certain time each week or each day for activities or Bible study?



Next, consider adopting one or more spiritual disciplines. Spiritual disciplines are traditions that can be practiced throughout Lent. They can help us grow closer to God by cutting out distractions and refocusing our time and talents. They include giving things up, taking things on and participation.

To encourage participation, it may help to guide children in picking something that's realistic for their age and maturity. It can be as simple as devoting time to learning a prayer or memorizing a short Bible passage. Adopt a spiritual discipline as a family, such as giving up some or all TV and devoting the extra time to mission work or Bible study. Mark a chart to check weekly progress.



Another way to start the season is to attend the pancake dinner at First Church. Making pancakes was a good way to use up all the fat, cream and

eggs in the house before Lent fasting began. This old tradition inspired the term "Fat Tuesday" or in French, "Mardi Gras."

It also inspired the pancake dinner that many congregations hold today. The First Church youth will

host a pancake dinner on Tuesday, February 21, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. You may purchase tickets in advance after each service or at the door. Tickets are \$4 for adults and \$3 for children 12 and under. The Treble Choir and Youth Choir will also provide entertainment during the event beginning at 7. They will perform *Moses and the Freedom Fanatics*. This should be a great event.

If you can't attend the pancake dinner, then throw your own family pancake dinner. Have children place fruit over their pancakes in a cross shape. If family members are going to give up favorite food or drinks, you may want to include these in your family dinner, too.

It's Time for Camp Registration!

If the Outdoor Ministries summer camp information has arrived, can spring be far behind? Everyone is ready to plan some fun in the sun and that's just what camp is. There are camps for kindergarten children and first graders with a grandparent. Weeklong camps are for children who have completed second grade and older. There are camps for teens and camps with themes. There are camps for adults and even one for families.

Registration has now begun!! Camp weeks fill up fast!!! Don't wait too long!!!

Online

Camp schedule and descriptions are available online at: <http://www.ocucc.org>

Once you've decided on a camp, just click one of the "Register Online" buttons to complete your registration and make your payment.



Remember to register by March 31 to receive the special "camp pack."

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 registration fee (after the \$75 deposit) to any First Church child or youth who wants to go to camp. *A request for these funds must be made by the parent /guardian. This is not automatic as in the past. (Continued on Page 5)*

Deep Griha Potluck Set at First Community on Feb. 12

By Fran Panek, Missions Co-Commissioner

As part of our ongoing partnership with Deep Griha, the Missions Committee invites you, your friends and family to the annual Deep Griha potluck at First Community North Campus, 3777 Dublin Rd., on Sunday, February 12.

The potluck to support the children of Deep Griha starts at 5:30 p.m. with fellowship and a meal, followed by a brief program. The Rev. Kate Shaner, minister of missions at First Community, will talk about why we should involve ourselves in support of overseas missions, along with a report from folks who will have just returned from a visit to Deep Griha and the City of Child.

An opportunity to sign up to sponsor a child will be available at the event. The annual cost of \$220 can be borne by one person or a group of people. Our church currently supports five students through our mission offerings, and several individual families have a Deep Griha student in the family. Come check it out – it's a great evening of fun and fellowship! Our own Don Streibig will serve as the master of ceremonies for the evening program.

Since it's a potluck, plan to bring a dish that serves eight-12 people. Suggested categories are A-N dessert; I-R salad; S-Z main dish. You can RSVP to Lauri Sullivan at 488-0681, ext. 113, for reservations.

2 Ways to Help Raise Cash for First Church

Do you want to help the church make money towards missions and programs? Here are two easy ways:

* Do you have a **Kroger** card? Do you shop at Kroger? If you answered yes to those questions, see Cindy Conn or Sharon Leidheiser after the worship in the church office and sign up to earn Kroger Community Reward dollars for the church. It's **free** and does not affect the gas discount you may get.

No time after the service? Then call Sharon Leidheiser at 614-228-1741, ext. 11, during the week and she'll walk you through the sign-up process at a time that's convenient for you.

* **Black Creek Bistro** on Parsons Avenue offers First Church a donation program all day on Tuesdays. When dining at Black Creek on Tuesdays, tell your waiter or

waitress that you are from First Church. They will calculate 10% of your check, minus alcohol and taxes, as a donation to First Church. At the end of the year, Black Creek donates the total to the church as a "good neighbor" program.

Christian Ed Has Lenten Resources

Lenten resources for children, families and adults will be available beginning Sunday, February 19, at the entrance to the worship space and in classrooms.

A Lenten children and teen activities calendar will be available and is perfect to display on a refrigerator or a family bulletin board. *Living in the Moment* is a new booklet of prayers, scriptures and reflections for each day of Lent for families and individuals. New this year is a bookmark, "The Teachings of Jesus," that provides daily Bible readings for Lent. Also new this year is a Lenten resource/activity book for children ages 4-11. Please pick up a copy at either service or in the office.

(SUMMER CAMP, Concluded from Page 4)

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 2012 camp registration form.
- 3.) Send the remaining amount owed to the Ohio Conference at least two weeks prior to your camp;
- 4.) Have a wonderful time!

Due to the increase in camp registration this year, First Church also will offer additional scholarships for those families who need extra help. Any child who wants to go to camp should not be sopped due to financial concerns of the family.

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

'Great Prayers of the Bible' Is 2012 Lenten Sermon Series

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister

On February 22, we begin our journey to Easter through the 40 days of Lent. This Lenten season, Rev. Wilson and I will share a sermon series on "Great Prayers of the Bible."

Based on *Great Prayers of the Old Testament* by Walter Brueggemann, we will not only speak from the pulpit, but also these prayers will be read and studied in our homes in small groups across greater Columbus. Stay tuned for more announcements and invitations to small groups.



Here is the schedule of sermons for Lent and Easter:

February 22 – Ash Wednesday Service – "Great Prayers Shape Our Faith"

February 26 – "Nehemiah: Gather Them and Bring Them Home, Lord" - Nehemiah 1:4-11

March 4 – "Abraham: Spare Them, Lord" - Genesis 18:22-33

March 11 – "Moses: Forgive Them, Lord" - Numbers 14:13-23

March 18 – "Hannah: My Heart Exults in the Lord" - 1 Samuel 2:1-10

March 25 – "Jeremiah: Deliver Us, Lord" - Jeremiah 32:16-25

April 1 – Palm Sunday – "Jesus Prays in the Time of Trial" - Luke 22:39-46

April 8 – Easter – "An Answer to Prayer" - Mark 16:1-8

UCC Day with God and Self is March 10



Get away from the noise and stress of the everyday - a day devoted to reconnecting with God through silence, worship and nature during the next Day with God and Self at Pilgrim Hills.

The events will be held on these dates this year: Saturday, March 10; Tuesday, May 1; Saturday, September 8; and Tuesday, Nov. 6. The cost is \$30.

Call Janet Burkhart for information at 330-682-3791.

Upcoming Events

February 21 – Pancake Dinner 5:30-7:30 p.m.

February 22 – Ash Wednesday Services, Noon and 7:30 p.m.

April 1 – Palm Sunday

April 5 – Maundy Thursday Dinner and Service

April 6 – Good Friday Service

April 8 – Easter

April 15 – Cabaret, 6-8 p.m.

April 20-22 – Spring Retreat

May 6 – Teacher Appreciation Sunday

May 12-13 – Walter Brueggemann Weekend

May 20 – Confirmation Sunday

May 27 – Pentecost Sunday

June 10 – Graduation Sunday/ Youth Mission Sunday



UCC Spring Lantern Fellowship is April 20-22

The spring Lantern Fellowship of the UCC's Ohio Conference will be April 20-22 at Pilgrim Hills. The topic will be "Jesus According to a Woman."



The keynote speaker will be Kathryn Ketchum, originally from Ohio. She has her

master's of divinity degree from Emory University, and served as a United Methodist minister in Louisiana. Recently, she has served in the UCC as a choir director and supply pastor. She also has a private counseling practice in Elyria, Ohio.

The program will examine how Jesus interacted with women in dramatic ways. By examining some of these encounters within the context of the biblical culture, it will look at how God has used women to proclaim the power of the Gospel.

For more information, go to www.ocucc.org.

Nursery Worker Needed

First Church is hiring a nursery worker. Applications are available in the church office. Questions? Contact Mark S. Williams at 228-1741, ext. 15, or mwilliams@first-church.org.

Should You Upgrade Computer to Microsoft Windows 7?

By Sharon Leidheiser, Business Administrator
(sleidheiser@first-church.org)

Many of u, including the church, have Windows XP or Windows Vista on our computers for our operating system. Upgrading to Windows 7 offers a number of benefits. If you have Microsoft XP or Vista you may want to consider upgrading.

In 2014, Microsoft Windows XP and Windows Vista in 2017 will no longer be supported by Microsoft. That means no updates to your XP operating system, which may cause you to get viruses, spam and other operating problems. Here's a list of things to do before you purchase the upgrade:



1. Check your hardware to make sure you have the requirements to upgrade to Windows 7:

- 1 GHz or faster processor (both versions)
- 1 GB (32-bit) or 2 GB (64-bit) RAM
- 16 GB (32-bit) or 20 GB (64-bit) minimum free hard drive space

To see if your computer has all these requirements go to **My Computer** on your desktop or on the **Start** menu, right-click **Properties**.

2. Will your software still run on Windows 7? Major vendors such as Adobe, Symantec, Intuit should be fine; however, free software you may be using may not.

3. How will you benefit from upgrading to Windows 7?
- a. Improved program compatibility
 - b. More flexibility
 - c. Simplified networking. **HomeGroup**, a new feature, allows you to access files, share files, etc., even if you do not have a server.

One more thing to note: MS Windows 8.0 was supposed to be released in September 2012 but rumor has it there are problems with the software and more testing is needed before it can be released. I wouldn't recommend waiting for it to be released, and would go ahead and upgrade to Windows 7.

Is Your Contact Information Current ?

Making sure your contact information is current to get you the information you need from First Church is our goal! Please consider emailing these changes to the church when you move or change your information:

- Disconnect of your landline phone system
- Move to new address
- Change in cell phone number
- Change in email
- Employment change
- New baby
- New adoption
- Foster children
- New marriage
- Divorce
- Separation
- Death in the family
- Retirement

Contact me via email (sleidheiser@first-church.org), phone (228-1742, ext. 11) or a note and I will update your information. Please remember, our church directory is only as good as the information we receive from you!

Cum Christo Weekends Scheduled

You are invited to participate in a once-in-a-lifetime experiential weekend of Christian learning and renewal. The March 22-25 Cum Christo men's weekend and the April 26-29 women's weekend are currently accepting applications. Future scheduled weekends in 2012 include men, October 18-21, and women, November 8-11.

If interested in attending, contact Paul Flocken at 614-403-4910 or email arlene@aol.com to learn more about the Cursillo method of piety, study, action and group reunion.



Missions Offering Schedule

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

- February 5 - Youth Mission Trip
- February 12 - Deep Griha
- February 19 - Back Bay Mission
- February 26 - UCC Seminaries

Alma Keeler Children's Library

Be My Valentine!

By Nancy Evans, Gayle Henderson and Elaine Warren
Library Volunteers

Two years ago, members of the congregation stepped forward to improve the Children's Library through renovation and by donating new books to update the collection. We hope that you will choose to make the Children's Library your special valentine this year by donating a new book to the Children's Library .



A list of the 100 best books for children (with a description of each book) is on the bulletin board in the main hallway behind the sanctuary. We have indicated which books we already have in the collection. Sign your name beside the description of the book you plan to donate to the Children's Library. There is paper and pencil on the bulletin board so you can write down the book's title and author to have with you when you purchase the book. Before donating the book, write your name in the book as the donor. Place your book in the box provided in the main office.

Radical Love

By Jess Peacock, Intern

Started by syndicated columnist and activist Dan Savage in response to a rash of suicides committed by young people within the LGBT community, the *It Gets Better Project* is a viral video campaign where people from all walks of life – gay, straight and transgender – actively encourage people struggling with their sexuality, pointing out that they are not alone in their difficulties.

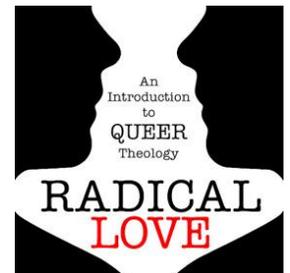
The videos posted on the site (www.itgetsbetter.org) are inspiring and touching, as actors, businessmen, writers, teachers, kids, moms, dads, and, yes, even Christians, share personal stories, while lending their voices to a powerful movement. Which begs the question: Is it getting better within the church?

The answer is both yes and no. Within some religious circles, "gay Christian" is still considered an oxymoron. And even some people of faith with a more progressive

view of gender and sexuality can still be confused as to how the LGBT community might effectively integrate into the life of the church. Here at First Congregational, not only are we preparing to celebrate 10 years as an Open and Affirming congregation, we also are taking steps to raise the profile of the church as a home for those in the LGBT community seeking to explore and grow in their faith.

In an effort to make things better, so to speak, First Congregational recently sponsored a visit from the UCC's own Rev. Kate Huey for a special discussion regarding LGBT issues, conducted a three-week class on scripture and homosexuality, currently serves as the host building for Dignity Columbus, will be presenting a two-week sermon series from Rev. Ahrens in February on LGBT issues, and will be hosting the 8th annual Equality Ohio Leadership Summit in March. We also will be presenting a five-week book study beginning Monday, February 27, from 7-8:p.m., based around the excellent book *Radical Love: An Introduction to Queer Theology* by Patrick Cheng.

Cheng (whose blog you can read at www.patrickcheng.net) is an ordained minister and professor at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, and has written a book that is both challenging and accessible for theologians and lay people. It should provide opportunities for some challenging and insightful conversations, not the least of which will surround the use of the term "queer."



As Cheng writes, "Isn't 'queer' a derogatory word? For some, the word 'queer' has painful connotations, especially if they were subjected to it as an epithet as a result of perceived or actual differences in sexuality or gender identity." However, as Cheng points out, biblical and theological scholars, when discussing theological interpretation through an LGBT lens, have commonly used this somewhat controversial term.

This and other challenging issues will undoubtedly be confronted as we engage the book *Radical Love*. We hope that you will be able to join us for this exciting study series as First Congregational continues to do its part to make it better.



Fair Trade: It's About Small Farmers

In the Fair Trade movement there are questions about whether or not sourcing Fair Trade coffee should extend beyond small farmers to plantations.

Fair Trade evolved to give fair market access to small-scale farmers. Since Equal Exchange first brought fairly traded coffee to the U.S., they have found that partnering with small-scale farmers democratically organized in co-ops - not plantations - is the best way to create a more just food system in which small farmers can make real economic and social changes in their lives.

New at 1st Church: Organic dark chocolate mini-candies and hot spicy cocoa. Try some!

Fellowship Hour Beverage Sales



Coffee and tea sales will be available on February 5 and 19 during Fellowship Hour. This is a UCC coffee project initiative and your participation is greatly appreciated.

Rev. Ahrens Begins Doctorate Study

This month, Rev. Tim Ahrens will begin a three-year program of study at Chicago Theological Seminary toward a Doctor of Ministry degree. His emphasis will be in Public Theology. Ten credits will be spread over areas of study including theology, Biblical studies, pastoral care and preaching.

He will be on campus in Chicago the last weeks of August and January every year until graduation in May 2015. Rev. Ahrens' has been approved for this effort with support from the Personnel Committee and Church Council.

Next Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for submitting articles for the March *First Church News* is February 20 at noon. It will be published Thursday, March 1.

Member Happy February Birthdays

4:	Randy Hoffman	20:	Dylan Hopcraft
5:	Ann McIsaac	21:	Nancy Nikiforow
5:	Anne Morgenstern	21:	Joe Lane
5:	Lynn Wallich	23:	Gleva Stephens
5:	Debbie Yontz	24:	Lola Edwards
6:	Marjorie Smith	24:	Alice Boden
6:	Sheila Faryman	24:	Kevin Cubick
6:	Abby Salak	25:	Samuel Gordon
7:	Jane Carter	25:	Mike Koscher
9:	Helen Cook	25:	Joanna McWilliams
9:	Ken Storey	25:	Julia Myers
9:	Tim Ahrens	26:	Georgia Swinger
9:	Jim Griffin	27:	Kim Hopcraft
9:	Vic Jennette	28:	Connie Johnson
9:	Dan Snyder	28:	Melva Fisher
10:	John Matney	29:	Tammy Alexander
12:	Mark Leidheiser		
14:	Bob Kutschbach		
14:	Becky Magaw		
15:	Herb Goetz		
16:	William Owen		
16:	Peggy Alexander		
16:	Dick Ward		
16:	Tom Farquhar		
17:	Jean Moran		
17:	Craig Clay		
17:	Tyler Reid		
18:	Kathryn Kiernan		
18:	Cindy Conn		
19:	Ron Cook Jr.		
20:	Malinda Breedlove-Wilson		
20:	Erick Gale		

Member Happy February Anniversaries

15:	Judy and Gerhardt Wolff
16:	Amy and Bill Wagner
17:	Anna and Mark Jensen
18:	Sallie and Karl Danneberger
19:	Cami Curren and Thom Smith

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

Spirituality presents Arti Gras! Feb. 18

Arti Gras!, a celebration of art and spirit presented by the Spirituality Network, will be held at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Saturday, February 18. For information, pick up a brochure in the church office or go to the Web site, www.spiritualitynetwork.org.

Calendar

Wednesday, February 1

11 am – Book Study – Parlor
12 pm – Fellowship Hour – PH

Thursday, February 2

10 am – First Thursday Fellowship – Zahn Home
6:15 pm – First Church Ringers – Gallery
7:30 pm – First Church Choir – Choir Room

Saturday, February 4

10 am – Youth Sunday Rehearsal – San
10 am – Youth Craft Event – PH

Sunday, February 5 (Youth Sunday)

9 am – Treble/Teen Choir – Choir Room
9 am – Worship – PH
10 am – Education Hour – Rooms C and D
10 am – Choir – San
11 am – Worship – Sanctuary
12 pm – Fellowship Hour – Sanctuary

Monday, February 6

6 pm – Church Growth – Ed Wing Room D
7 pm – Property Planning Group – LC

Tuesday, February 7

11:45 pm – Card Care Ministry – LC
12:15 pm – First Tuesday Concert – San
12:45 pm – First Tuesday Luncheon – PH
5:30 pm – Sacred Earth – LC
7 pm – Budget/Finance-Council Meeting – LC
7 pm – Education Committees – Room D
7 pm – Mission Committee – PFR

Thursday, February 9

10 am – Second Thursday Fellowship – Parlor
6:15 pm – First Church Ringers – Gallery
7:30 pm – First Church Choir – Choir Room

Saturday, February 11

10 am – First Church Quilters – LC

Sunday, February 12

9 am – Treble/Teen Choir – Choir Room
9 am – Worship – PH
10 am – Choir – Sanctuary
10 am – Education Hour – Rooms C and D
11 am – Worship – San
12 pm – Fellowship Hour – PH
12:30 pm – Confirmation Class – Room D
6 pm – Middle School Youth Group – Middle School Room
6 pm – Sonreir – PH

Monday, February 13

7 pm – Trustees – LC

Tuesday, February 14

12 pm – Card Care Ministry – LC
6 pm – Music Committee – Parlor
7 pm – Executive Committee – PFR

Wednesday, February 15

11 am – Book Study – Parlor

Thursday, February 16

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

Saturday, February 18

9 am – House and Grounds – PFR

Sunday, February 19

9 am – Treble/Teen Choir – Choir Room
9 am – Worship – PH
10 am – Choir – Sanctuary
10 am – Education Hour – Rooms C and D

11 am – Worship – San
12 pm – Fellowship Hour – PH
6 pm – Sonreir – PH
6 pm – Middle School Group – Middle School Room
9 pm – Compline – San

Monday, February 20

12 pm – Newsletter Deadline

Tuesday, February 21

12 pm – Card Care Ministry – LC
5 pm – Pancake Dinner and Musical – PH
7:30 pm – Council – LC

Wednesday, February 22 (Ash Wednesday)

12 pm – Worship – San
7:30 pm – Worship – San

Thursday, February 23

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

Sunday, February 26

9 am – Treble/Teen Choir – Choir Room
9 am – Worship – PH
10 am – Education Hour – Rooms C and D
10 am – Choir – San
11 am – Worship – Sanctuary
12 pm – Fellowship Hour – Sanctuary
5 pm – Congregational Concert – San
6 pm – Sonreir – PH

Monday, February 27

7 pm – Budget and Finance – LC

Tuesday, February 28

12 pm – Card Care Ministry – LC
7 pm – Personnel – PFR

February Fellowship Hour

February 5: Kings
 February 12: Leviticus
 February 19: Micah
 February 26: Numbers

February Acolyte Schedule

February 5: Ben Allen and Anna Rambo
 February 12: Ben Allred and Adam Wade
 February 19: Courtney Batchelor and Annie Rose Cooke
 February 26: Jansen Allred and Emily Cooke
 (Schedules online at www.first-church.org)

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.

Weddings

Stephanie Paul and Nick D'Amico – January 21

Baptism

Jonah Colin Ewing – January 8

Deaths

Walter Kropp – January 9
 Janice Kutschbach – January 12
 Jason Bishop – January 17

~ Remember Your Loved Ones ~
 With a Dedication of Flowers
 Contact Marty Worth at 614.228.1741, ext. 14,
mworth@first-church.org

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
 Denny Mahoney.....Office Manager
 Thomas Luff.....Building Manager
 Kelvin Murphy.....Custodian
 Frank Wall, William Lee.....Custodians
 Nikki Boop, Rosemary Pawandiwa-Priore.....Nursery
 Chinyere Nuesom.....Nursery
 Linda Mumford.....Wedding Coordinator
 Jane Chavers.....Wedding Coordinator
 Fran Panek.....Wedding Coordinator

Church Council

Gerry Worth.....Moderator
 Sarah Reed.....Vice-Moderator
 Bev Cook/Jim Griffin.....Secretary/Assistant
 Cindy Conn.....Treasurer
 Neal Brower/Jim Fewlass.....Administration/Assistant
 Melissa Prendergast/Deb Thompson.....Church Growth/Asst.
 Tanya Miller/Deana Armstrong.....Education/Asst
 Charlie Weaver/Rick Sayre.....House & Grounds/Assistant
 Bruce Panek/Matt Allen.....Mission/Assistant
 Cori Rowley/Catherine Kennedy.....Parish Life/Assistant
 Elaine Warren.....Senior Deacon
 Betty Johnson.....Deacon
 Jim Gallagher/Greg Halbe.....Music, Arts, Heritage/Asst.
 David Holt.....Nominating Chair
 Christopher Washington.....Trustees
 James Knerr.....Member-at-large
 Lisa Morris.....Member-at-large

The First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
444 E. Broad St.
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3821

DATED MATERIAL - VERY IMPORTANT
Please Deliver By: Saturday February 4, 2012

TO:

[Empty dashed rectangular 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