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First Church News

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Columbus, Ohio

“Enter to Worship – Depart to Serve”

Lent: A Season of Blessings

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

On Ash Wednesday, February 13, I will open the season of Lent with a sermon entitled “Blessed Are You.” I will lift up and celebrate the teachings of Jesus for all of us on the blessings of a life lived in faith.



In a sense, the Beatitudes found in Matthew 5:1-11 are “Life Attitudes.” When we embrace our poverty of spirit, need for comfort in our mourning, meekness in our daily dealings, righteousness for hard times, mercy and purity of heart in relation to God and others, peace in troubled times (personally and globally), and a true sense of ourselves in the midst of persecution, we are forming life attitudes.

I am excited about this year’s Lenten sermon series. We will hear from our new Moderator and Pastoral Care Leader at Nationwide Children’s Hospital, the Rev. Sarah Reed. She will preach on “comforting those who mourn.” Dominican Sister of Peace, Maxine Shonk, O.P., will preach on peacemaking. Rev. Janine Wilson will preach on meekness and hungering for righteousness. I will speak other weeks and address the balance of the blessings.

Throughout the season, we will look at our life attitudes in preaching, teaching, small groups and our own personal devotions. Promise me this: During this season of prayer, you will find time to pray. Promise me you will look at your life attitudes. Beyond what you are promising to “give up” for Lent, please “take on” time, space and a heart for prayer.

Enclosed you will find a variety of programs, sermon offerings, classes and guides for prayer during Lent. May God bless and keep you in this season of prayer. I will be praying for you each day. I hope to see you in church throughout this season of Lent – and bring your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers.

Rev. Dr. Susan Thistlethwaite to Preach, Teach Feb. 10-11

Dr. Susan Thistlethwaite will preach and teach from her new book, *Occupy the Bible: What Jesus Really Said and Did and Economic Injustice*, here at First Church on February 10 and 11.

We are honored to welcome Susan to the pulpit on Sunday, February 10. She will preach at 9 and 11a.m. and lead the education hour at 10 a.m. On Monday, February 11, she will lead a seminar on her new book. The seminar will be from 10 a.m.-noon, with a lunch to follow. All First Church members are invited. Cost of a box lunch is \$10. See the sign-up sheet in the bulletin or at our Web site (www.first-church.org).



Rev. Thistlethwaite

She is a professor of theology at Chicago Theological Seminary. She was seminary president from 1998 to 2008. Upon completing two five-year terms as president, she returned to full-time teaching on the faculty. She has a Ph.D. from Duke University, a Masters of Divinity (*Summa Cum Laude*) from Duke Divinity School and a B.A. from Smith College.

Susan has been an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ since 1974. She currently is working in a new area she calls “public theology.” She writes a weekly column for the *Washington Post*, “On Faith,” and is a frequent media commentator on religion and public events.

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Looking Forward

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

One of my favorite parts of reading the annual report at First Congregational Church is the way hundreds of individual events, projects, hopes, missions and visions are all remembered and reframed within the overarching vision of bringing glory to God, in the form of being part of the living Christ, responding to our Long Range Plan, which was created with great attentiveness to where members and leaders feel God is calling us a congregation, i.e., a church, a fellowship of joy located here in the heart of Columbus, Ohio!



It is so easy to get caught up in thinking about an annual report as a task, a duty, a chore, a timeline with “rush” written in red at the end of it, when in reality, it means so much more. It is too easy to bury its reality in our reductionist thinking. These things entered into our annual report, and indeed in the annual meeting to come, are all about God. These things we have reported and engaged in January 27 at our meeting are some of the ways we seek to bring glory to God, even as we read and meet. I’ll just stop there, where I began. It’s big stuff and I thank God we have the privilege to serve together.

The second part I enjoy about our annual report is the way it sets up the next thing, now is the time we get to refocus. When I was little, I used to get to go with my mom to the bowling alley each week and watch her and her bowling team play, laugh, strategize, reframe (literally) and celebrate before, during and after. There is joy as well in annual discussions as they help us to clarify what just happened, what the next step needs to be and how it might be accomplished. I thank God we have the privilege to serve together as individuals who are part of a team.

The third part I enjoy about our annual report and meeting is the way they set things up again - the pins are standing back up for us to respond to as individuals and as a team. I am looking forward to working with several teams: creating a feedback loop with Kevin Jones and 9 o’clock worshipers - exchanging fresh ideas for worship; with Parish Life for offering the events with history and some that are coming anew this year (three quarterly gatherings; an annual retreat for women; monthly breakfast prayer gatherings for men; and regular younger adult and family gatherings.) Church

Growth will be present at several venues this year – reaching out to invite others in, as well as discovering new ways for new attendees and members to get acquainted and feel at home here.

Personnel will finally have time to breathe a bit and look into the future without it being filled with revisions and transitions. I look forward to seeing where their joy will meet the needs of the world here at 444 E. Broad Street. House and Grounds and our building manager Tom and I will be working on the creation of two emerging groups of 12 people each for 2013 -- half with a love of the outdoors and half with an interest in hammers, hinges and both groups interested in transformations large and small. We are in search of fun names for both of these work/play/build/create/maintain groups. So if you want to sign up first and/or have suggestions, please give me a call!

With joy,
Janine

Upcoming Sermons

Lenten Sermon Series: “Blessed Are You!”

February 13

Ash Wednesday - “Blessed Are You” – Rev. Tim Ahrens

February 17

“Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit” – Rev. Ahrens

February 24 –

“Blessed Are Those Who Mourn” – Rev. Sarah Reed

March 3

“Blessed Are The Meek and the Hungering For Righteousness” – Rev. Janine Wilson

March 10

“Blessed Are the Merciful and the Pure in Heart” – Rev. Ahrens

March 17

“Blessed Are the Peacemakers” – Sr. Maxine Shonk

March 24

Palm/Passion Sunday - “Blessed are You When You are Persecuted...” Rev. Ahrens

March 31

Easter Sunday – “The Kingdom of Heaven is Yours!” - Rev. Ahrens



Congregation Adopts Constitution

The Annual Congregational Meeting was held following one service of worship on January 27. Rev. Wilson opened with a prayer and Moderator Gerry Worth called the meeting to order. Tom Brownfield, acting as parliamentarian, declared a quorum was present and the minutes of the January 2012 Annual Meeting and the special meeting held in May 2012, were approved.

Rev. Ahrens thanked Gerry Worth and the Council members for their service during this past year. He also acknowledged the staff for all they have done, his family for their patience and understanding, and thanked the congregation for their participation and involvement with all that was accomplished in 2012.



Christopher Washington and Sue Cook spoke of the accomplishments of the Trustees and added that the funds grew by 21.5% during the last fiscal year. Elaine Warren thanked the deacons and reported that two major goals had been achieved during the year: 1) the expansion of the usher/greeter program, and 2) support for the Long Range Plan by establishment of First Connections, Agape Groups, Friendly Visitors Program and the Bereavement Committee.

David Holt introduced those nominated for the 2013 Council. The congregation unanimously approved the election of new officers, trustees and deacons. David also reported for the Capital Campaign and stated that 2.2 million dollars has been received for the Capital Campaign to date.

Sarah Reed, incoming Moderator, reported that Council will continue to work toward the goals of the Long Range Plan during the coming year. Gerry Worth thanked all members of council and especially acknowledged the Youth at Large member, James Knerr, for his consistent attendance and participation in council meetings. Gerry noted some of the accomplishments during the year included the removal for renovation of the Jeffrey Window and the sale of the chapel organ and restoration of the chapel to its original use as well as renaming it the Gladden Memorial Chapel. Gerry encouraged all members to become involved and participate in the life of the church.

Treasurer Cindy Conn presented the budget for 2013 and Neal Brower moved to affirm the 2013 budget as presented while preserving Council's constitutional responsibility for determining the operating budget, raising the necessary funds, and making necessary

adjustments to the budget throughout the year. The motion was approved.

Francille Firebaugh presented the revised Constitution for approval by the congregation. After a motion was made to approve the revised Constitution, another motion to vote on the Constitution article by article was rejected. The congregation then approved the Constitution in whole, as revised. The vote was Aye 82, Nay 26.

After remarks by Interim Association Minister Roger Miller, Sarah Reed presented Gerry Worth with a gift and recognition of his leadership on behalf of the 2012 council. Rev. Ahrens offered a closing prayer and the meeting adjourned for a luncheon in the Parish Hall. –
Submitted by Bev Cook, Secretary



You Can Make a Difference!

In our ever-expanding global economy, goods are often produced without the environment or workers in mind. What are your values in life? Do you apply them to your everyday living?

If you care about fair wages and a healthier environment, one example is to buy products that are Fair Trade Certified. This certification ensures that the workers making the products – often in a developing country - were given a fair wage, and that the item was crafted sustainably. Look for Fair Trade coffee, chocolate and teas at the Fellowship Hour after each worship service at the Sacred Earth Committee's table. Or purchase those and other artisan products at www.transfairusa.org.

Another example is to be a *locavore*, someone who buys locally produced or grown products. A typical carrot travels more than 1,800 miles to reach your dinner table. By supporting farmers close to home, you drastically reduce the cost of transportation for your food and other goods and you help the local economy. Think farmer's markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), or other stores who support local farmers!

Think also about other ways that you can apply your values to your daily life. What can we do to live socially responsible lifestyles that are least damaging to our planet? What you do every day makes a difference! –
Kent Shimeall

Make Plans For the Lenten Season

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

Shrove Tuesday is February 12, 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.



**SHROVE
TUESDAY**

Another way to start the season is to attend the fourth annual 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 12, 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 \$5 for adults and \$3 for children 12 and under. This is always 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.

Christian Ed Has Lenten Resources

Lenten resources for children, families and adults will be available beginning Sunday, February 10, 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 booklet of prayers, scriptures and reflections for each day of Lent for families and individuals.

There is a Lenten resource/activity book *What Color is Lent* for children ages 4-11. Please pick up a copy at either service or in the office.

Valentine’s Day Youth Fudge Sale



The youth of First Church are selling “heart-shaped” homemade fudge after each worship service in the Parish Hall and through the week during office hours starting February 3. The cost is \$3 for a 4 ounce heart, \$5 for an 8 ounce heart and \$10 for a pound heart. We will also have chocolate, chocolate with walnuts, peanut butter and limited buckeye fudge in our regular half-pound and pound boxes.

This is the same recipe used at the former Benevolence Bakery. You also can place orders for additional amounts. Sales benefit the youth summer mission trip.

Spring Retreat Set for April 19-21

This year’s spring retreat will be Friday evening, April 19, through Sunday morning, April 21, at Temple Hills camp and retreat center. It is an hour north of Columbus off I-71 at Bellville. Please mark your calendars and plan to bring your whole family or just yourself.

Brochure and registration forms will be in the church office and on the Web site after March 10. **Deadline for registration is April 10.** We have space for 90 people – let’s fill it! See Mark S. Williams for more information.

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.

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.* 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 2013 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 stopped 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.**

First Church Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibit Outing to Cincinnati is February 18

Be a part of a wonderful opportunity to view the *Dead Sea Scrolls: Faith and Life in Ancient Times* exhibit at the Cincinnati Museum of Art! The First Church community will car-pool to see this exhibit on Monday, February 18. The trip is planned so families can attend since it is President's Day and many members have the day off and schools are closed.

The cost of the ticket is \$10 for children under 12 and \$19 for adults and youth. The deadline to purchase a ticket is February 12. Checks can be made out to First Congregational Church and in the memo line write Dead Sea Scroll tickets.

We will meet at the church that day at 8 a.m. We are scheduled to enter the exhibit at 10:30 a.m. The exhibit takes about an hour and a half to two hours to complete. There are wonderful activities for children at this event as well.

Please check the "Get Involved Bulletin" Board if you need a ride or if you are willing to drive and share space in your car. For more information, contact Mark Williams at 228-1741 ext. 15 or email mwilliams@first-church.org.

Deep Griha Fundraiser is Feb. 24

Bring the entire family to "Bollywood and Barbecue" on Sunday, February 24, from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at First Community Church's North Campus, 3777 Dublin Rd., to benefit the Deep Griha Society of Pune, India.

Highlights will include "Bollywood" dancing, yoga, henna hand painting and sari wrapping! The tickets - \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and under - support the services offered by Deep Griha. The festivities will celebrate more than 30 years of partnership with the Onawale family, founders of this UCC affiliated organization.



Before dinner, two "Bollywood" groups - one for kids age 8 and under and the other for the older crowd - will each have an instructor and dancers to teach techniques. The audience also will have an opportunity to participate in a group dance. Basic yoga instruction will be given, so dress casually and bring a mat!

Music Notes February 2013

By Kevin Jones, Minister of Music
(kjones@first-church.org)

As I begin my second month serving as your Minister of Music, I wanted to thank each one of you for being so welcoming, so helpful and so supportive during my "breaking in" period. I've met so many of you thus far and look forward to continuing to get to know this joyful community in the months and years ahead.



I'm honored to have been chosen by you and thankful to be here. I'm also very indebted to the wonderful staff of First Church for helping me find out where things are, how things get done and the manifold nooks and crannies of life at First Church. Without them, I'd still be looking for my office.

Our concert season has an active month in store. **First Tuesdays** returns on **Tuesday, February 5**, with Organist-Choirmaster Emeritus G. Dene Barnard playing an all-British organ program featuring the music of Benjamin Britten, Gerald Finzi, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Percy Whitlock. Please join us for the program at 12:15 p.m. Lunch follows in the Parish Hall at 12:45 p.m.

I also want to invite you to our next **Congregational Concert** on **Sunday, February 10, at 4 p.m.** All the Choirs of First Church join together for a program entitled, "Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!" February 10 is the last Sunday after the Epiphany, but is also Transfiguration Sunday. What we have planned is an afternoon of readings – some from scripture, some not – and anthems, motets, hymns and instrumental reflections on those readings. Please join us for a wonderful celebration of the melding of words and music.

Following February 10, we say goodbye to our short season of Epiphany and hello to the annual walk of Lent. Lent evokes sadness and darkness to some, but I've always found it a great opportunity to pause, reflect and take stock of things, all while walking through the "wilderness" of my own life. I find it a necessary clearing out and prioritizing before being able to fully encounter the joy of Easter.

Our music on Sundays will reflect this journey. From the penitent *Kyrie eleison* (Lord, have mercy) of Duruflié to

the prayerful "Pilgrims' Hymn" of Stephen Paulus, to the joyful expression of the Treble Choir singing *The Gift to be Simple*, Lent is a time to experience the breadth of the emotions of life. It is my hope that our choices will complement your own wilderness journey.

I look forward to evolving our relationship together to further the ministry of the Body of Christ.

Thanks for Helping Good Samaritan

I want to thank the congregation for their support of the Good Samaritan Fund in 2012. We were able to help 529 people in various ways, including transportation, food, IDs and birth certificates. We kept many from having their heat and water turned off or helped to get it turned back on. It is only through your generosity to those in need that we can help so many.

Al Waddell and Allen Baker gave a donation to the Good Samaritan Fund in appreciation of Josh Lapp and Mitchell Rose. - **Marty Worth, Good Samaritan Fund Administrator**

Upcoming Events

February 2 – Children's Mission Party/Nationwide Children's Hospital Valentine Cards 10 a.m.
February 3 - Youth Sunday
February 5 – First Tuesday Concert 12:15 p.m.
February 10-11 – Guest Preacher, Rev. Dr. Susan Thislethwaite
February 10 – Congregational Concert 4 p.m.
February 12 – Pancake Dinner 5:30-7:30 p.m.
February 13 – Ash Wednesday Services, Noon and 7:30 p.m.
February 18 – Dead Sea Scrolls Trip
February 22 – Youth Groups Snow Tubing at Snow Trails
March 5 – First Tuesday Concert 12:15 p.m.
March 17 – Congregational Concert 4 p.m.
March 24 – Palm Sunday
March 28 – Maundy Thursday Dinner and Service
March 29 – Good Friday Service
March 31 – Easter
April 2 – First Tuesday Concert 12:15 p.m.
April 19-21-22 – Spring Retreat
April 28 – Congregational Concert – 4 p.m.
May 5 – Teacher Appreciation Sunday
May 7 – First Tuesday Concert 12:15 p.m.
May 12 – Youth Flower Sale Arrival
May 19 – Confirmation Sunday/ Pentecost Sunday
June 2 – Graduation Sunday
July 7-12 - Youth Mission Trip



Bereavement Committee Update

By Elaine Warren

We would like to thank all those who helped with the three funeral/memorial service luncheons in January.

Over 40 people responded with food and help with set up, serving, clean-up. There were around 60 people at the luncheon on the 4th after the funeral for Lee Burba. About 110 people were served on the 5th after the memorial service for Chris Mondiek. On January 19 we had about 35 people who attended the luncheon after the memorial service for Ed Waller. Significant help was given to us by the Faith Mission team, particularly Bruce Panek and Bill Wirsching.



Those of us who were there could see the comfort, support and friendship offered to the bereaved during the sharing of a meal. We were all touched by the gratitude of the families for whom we prepared the luncheons. This is certainly a worthy ministry of care for our church to undertake.

The church potluck is our chosen model. This way everyone can share his or her favorite dish -- one that always receives compliments. Speaking of compliments, Kathy Brownfield's pumpkin pie bars were a hit at the luncheon on January 19.

We began with five members on the committee and 16 others who wanted to contribute food. We have grown in numbers but can always use more hands and more food. We would like to have 8-10 members on the Bereavement Committee so that if someone is ill or on vacation, we will still have enough to get the job done. Please email Elaine Warren (melainewarren232@aol.com) to volunteer.

Members of the committee are: Nancy Burba, Sarah Garbe, Diana Kutschbach, Joyce Oyler, Jan Wade and Elaine Warren.

Lenten Groups Focus on Beatitudes

Joyfully we step into Lent in a few weeks. Last year, 95 people participated in seven small groups throughout Central Ohio. Our theme for 2012 was "Great Prayers of the Old Testament." This year, we study the Beatitudes in both our small groups and our preaching/teaching times.

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.

When a call or email comes to your home inviting you to participate, please respond. You are being joyfully and lovingly invited into the home and heart of another member. Enjoy! – Rev. Tim Ahrens

Photo Exhibit on Display at First Church

Members are invited to browse the "Painting with Light" photographic exhibit currently on display in the Large Conference Room. The photographs are the work of Darlene Yeager-Torre.

The exhibit displays a technique involving photographs that are exposed for an unusually long time, sometime longer than a minute as opposed to milliseconds. Typically, a photo freezes time. During long exposures, everything that transpires is recorded: trains pass through the scene, stars leave trails and colored light sticks give the illusion of foliage.

The exhibit continues in February.

Cum Christo Weekends Coming Up

You are invited to participate in a once-in-a-lifetime experiential weekend of Christian learning and renewal with upcoming Cum Christo retreats. Contact Paul Flocken at (614) 403-4910 or arlene@aol.com to learn more about the Cursillo method of piety, study, action and group reunion and to register.

The February 28 – March 3 men's weekend and April 11-14 women's weekend are currently accepting applications. Future scheduled weekends in 2013 include one for men October 3-6 and for women November 7-10.

Council Summary January 2013

Moderator Gerry Worth called the last meeting of the 2012 Council to order and Rev. Tim Ahrens thanked all outgoing council members for their service during this past year. The new Council begins its term in February.

Rev. Ahrens stated that the staff has welcomed Kevin Jones as Minister of Music and all is off to a great start. Tim also indicated that the interior masonry work is complete on the stonework surrounding the Jeffrey Window and the scaffolding should be coming down before the end of the month. Exterior repairs on the stonework will be completed in the spring.



Cindy Conn, Treasurer, announced that the budget has been balanced for 2013. David Holt stated that 70% of the pledges have been received for the Capital Campaign and 56% of the money has been spent on renovations and the purchase of the West Lot.

Sarah Reed, Moderator-Elect, announced that orientation for the new Council will be held February 17, and next steps in the Long Range Plan will be addressed by the new Council beginning with the orientation. Sarah also announced that both David Holt and Rev. Janine Wilson will be leading groups at the Central Southeast Association's leadership workshop to be held at St. John's UCC Church on February 23.

Neal Brower, Administration Commissioner, said that we are still short of our goal of \$645,800 for the 2013 budget by about \$55,000. The Stewardship Committee is working to close the pledge campaign and they will be reaching out to households who have pledged in the past but have not pledged for 2013.

Council discussed the agenda for the Annual Meeting, including plans for the luncheon to follow the meeting. In action items council approved a mission endowment request to help fund food costs for 15 people to attend the Hunger Network in Ohio Board Planning Retreat at Temple Hills on April 14-15, and approved the Sunday mission collections through the end of March.

Gerry Worth thanked the Council for their work and support during 2012, and David Holt, on behalf of Council, acknowledged appreciation to Gerry for his leadership. The new Council will meet February 19, with Sarah Reed as moderator. – **Submitted by Bev Cook, Secretary**

Remember a Loved One With Flowers

Sanctuary flowers on a Sunday morning. There are those who regularly dedicate flowers on an annual basis. But there are many opportunities to do so throughout the year. We have had flowers to celebrate baptisms, special anniversaries and special events here at First Church, for example. Did you know 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. The cost of the flowers is \$65, which covers what the church is charged by the florist. It is possible for a group of people to share the cost and dedicate the flowers on a specific Sunday. If you would like to dedicate flowers for Sunday 11 a.m. worship, please sign up on the flower chart at Fellowship Hour, or you can contact Marty Worth (mworth@first-church.org) and specify date or dates requested. – **Marty Worth**



Budget Update

Pledges Budgeted

\$624,243

December Actual Pledges

\$116,849.95

Pledges Needed Monthly

\$52,020.25

Pledges Year to Date

\$633,073.55

December and January Mission Offerings

Christmas Fund \$3,209.27

Good Samaritan \$2,107

Church World Services \$505.25

Gladden House \$592

Blood Drive Changed to April 14

Our next blood drive will be April 14 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. It originally was scheduled for March 3. Sign-ups will be held beginning in late March.

Recent Gifts to First Church

By Bill Johannes and Jane Werum

Given to the Legacy Fund in celebration of Barbara Reed's special birthday by **Sherry L. Mackay, Linda P. Malone, Molly A. McCarrick, Dr. Charles V. and Emily Meckstroth, Nanci Morris, Martha Wagers, Sharel M. Morrow, Kathy A. Paul, Viki Rogers, Penelope A. Russ, Janet B. Salt, Anne Seckel, Craig Seckel, Robert N. Singletary, Janet L. Smith, Gleva G. Stephens, Vicki L. Thomas, Carolyn Thompson, Rena L. Vesler, Jean H. Walsh, Anna M. Wernicke, Jane Werum, Mark Stephen Williams, Bill and Holly Heer, Mary Jane Wolfel, and Regina A. Wolfel**



Given to the Legacy Fund by **Marie Pfeiffer**

Given to the Knight Perry Fund by **Tom Worley and Nancy Loy**

Given to the Dorinda K. White Endowment Fund by **Jim Kyle**

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

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 Church office. If you would like to support First Church as part of your estate planning, please contact Rev. Ahrens or a Trustee.



Missions Offering Schedule

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

- February 3 - Outdoor Ministries
- February 10 - C.U.E. Seminarians
- February 13 (Ash Wednesday) - Good Samaritan
- February 17 - Back Bay Mission
- February 24 - Deep Griha

Member Happy February Birthdays

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 4: Randy Hoffman | 20: Elaine Borling |
| 5: Ann Mclsaac | 20: Michael Frost |
| 5: Anne Morganstern | 20: Malinda Breedlove-Wilson |
| 5: Lynn Wallich | 21: Joe Lane |
| 5: Debbie Yontz | 23: Gleva Stephens |
| 6: Marjorie Smith | 23: Gil Pettigrew |
| 6: Sheila Faryman | 24: Lola Edwards |
| 6: Abby Salak | 24: Alice Boden |
| 7: Jane Carter | 24: Kevin Cubick |
| 9: Helen Cook | 25: Samuel Gordon |
| 9: Tim Ahrens | 25: Mike Koscher |
| 9: Jim Griffin | 25: Joanna McWilliams |
| 9: Vic Jennette | 25: Julia Myers |
| 9: Dan Snyder | 26: Georgia Swinger |
| 9: Lindsey Aldrich | 27: Kim Hopcraft |
| 12: Mark Leidheiser | 28: Constance Johnson |
| 13: Jason Brant | 28: Melva Fisher |
| 14: Bob Kutschbach | 29: Tammy Alexander |
| 14: Becky Magaw | |
| 15: Herb Goetz | |
| 16: William Owen | |
| 16: Peggy Alexander | |
| 16: Dick Ward | |
| 16: Tom Farquhar | |
| 17: Craig Clay | |
| 17: Tyler Reid | |
| 17: Rachel Henderson | |
| 18: Cindy Conn | |
| 19: Ron Cook Jr. | |



Member Happy February Anniversaries

- 5: Kris and Richard Brant
- 14: Debbie Kelly and Larry Thorne
- 16: Amy and Bill Wagner
- 17: Anna and Mark Jensen
- 18: Sallie and Tom Danneberger
- 19: Cami Curren and Thom Smith
- 22: Julie Parsons and Roger Fox

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

Thursday Fellowship Meets February 14

The Thursday Fellowship will meet February 14 at 10 a.m. in the Parlor for refreshments. Those present will share about a book they have read in the past year. Everyone is welcome.

Next Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for submitting articles for the March *First Church News* is February 18 at noon. It will be published Friday, March 1.

Calendar

Saturday, February 2

10 am – Youth Sunday Rehearsal – San

10 am – Youth Valentines – PH

Sunday, February 3 (Youth Sunday)

9 am – Worship – PH

9 am – Teen/Treble Choir – Choir Room

10 am – Christian Education Hour – Rooms C and D

10 am – First Church Choir

11 am – Worship – San

12 pm – Fellowship Hour – PH

12:30 pm – BOBS Meeting – LC

6 pm – High School Youth – PH and Youth Room

Monday, February 4

6 pm – Church Growth/Parish Life – PFR

7 pm – Deacons – LC

7 pm – Dublin Community Church Youth – PH

Tuesday, February 5

12:15 pm – First Tuesday Concert – San

12:45 pm – First Tuesday Luncheon – PH

1:30 pm – Care Ministry – LC

5:30 pm – Sacred Earth – LC

7 pm – Education Committees – Ed Wing, Room D

7 pm – Mission Committee – LC

Wednesday, February 6

11 am – Book Study – Parlor

Thursday, February 7

6:15 pm – First Church Ringers – Gallery

7:30 pm – First Church Choir – Choir Room/Sanctuary

Saturday, February 9

10 am – Choir Rehearsal – San

10 am – First Church Quilters – LC

4 pm – UCC Middle School Skating – Chiller

Sunday, February 10 (Rev. Susan Thistlethwaite)

9 am – Worship – PH

9 am – Teen/Treble Choir – Choir Room

10 am – Christian Education Hour – Rooms C and D

10 am – First Church Choir

11 am – Worship – San

12 pm – Fellowship Hour – PH

12:30 pm – Confirmation – Ed Wing, Room D

4 pm – Congregational Concert – San

6 pm – Middle School Youth – Middle School Room

6 pm – High School Youth – PH and Youth Room

Monday, February 11

9 am – Rev. Thistlethwaite Workshop – PH

7 pm – First Connections – LC

7 pm – Trustees – PFR

Tuesday, February 12

12 pm – Care Ministry- LC

5:30 pm – Pancake Dinner – PH

6 pm – Music Committee – Parlor

7 pm – Executive Committee – LC

Thursday, February 14

10 am – Thursday Fellowship – Parlor

6:15 pm – First Church Ringers – Gallery

7:30 pm – First Church Choir – Choir Room/Sanctuary

Saturday, February 16

9 am – House and Grounds - PFR

10 am – Ohio Global Mission Team – Parlor/LC

Sunday, February 17

9 am – Worship – PH

9 am – Teen/Treble Choir – Choir Room

10 am – Christian Education Hour – Rooms C and D

10 am – First Church Choir

11 am – Worship – San

12 pm – Fellowship Hour – PH

6 pm – High School Youth – PH and Youth Room

Monday, February 18

Dead Sea Scrolls Trip to Cincinnati

Tuesday, February 19

12 pm – Care Ministry – LC

7 pm – Council - LC

Wednesday, February 20

11 am – Book Study – Parlor

Thursday, February 21

6:15 pm – First Church Ringers – Gallery

7:30 pm – First Church Choir – Choir Room/Sanctuary

Sunday, February 24

9 am – Worship – PH

9 am – Teen/Treble Choir – Choir Room

10 am – Christian Education Hour – Rooms C and D

10 am – First Church Choir

11 am – Worship – San

12 pm – Fellowship Hour – PH

6 pm – Middle School Youth – Middle School Room

6 pm – High School Youth – PH and Youth Room

Monday, February 25

7 pm – Budget and Finance - LC

Tuesday, February 26

12 pm – Care Ministry – LC

7 pm – Personnel – PFR

Thursday, February 28

6:15 pm – First Church Ringers – Gallery

7:30 pm – First Church Choir – Choir Room/Sanctuary

Fellowship Hour Beverage

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



Men's Breakfast

Mark your calendars and plan to come enjoy breakfast – 8-9 a.m., the third Saturday of every month, beginning February 16.

Facilitator - Alex Throckmorton

For more information contact

Rev. Wilson at:

614 228-1741, ext. 21, or

jwilson@first-church.org

Prayers

Prayers

February Fellowship Hour

February 3	Samuel
February 10	Zechariah
February 17	Acts
February 24	Amos

February Acolyte Schedule

February 3	Luke Zimmerman and Jack Koscher
February 10	Miriam Myers and Nina Zimmerman
February 17	Adam Wade and Peter Spofforth
February 24	Mia Provenzano and Anna Rambo

(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.

Baptisms

Julian Edward Nunez – January 13
Kyle Patrick Storey – January 13

Weddings

Erin Pfefferle and Nathan Gapinski – January 19

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

You are Invited

**Columbus Faith Coalition
Against Violence Service
February 10, 6 p.m.
Congregation Tifereth Israel
1354 E Broad St.**

Church Staff

Timothy C. Ahrens.....	Senior Minister
Janine Wilson.....	Associate Minister
Kevin Jones.....	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
William Lee.....	Custodian
Rosemary Pawandiwa-Priore.....	Nursery
Summer Petras.....	Nursery
Anne Abbott-Merriman.....	Nursery
Linda Mumford.....	Wedding Coordinator
Jane Chavers.....	Wedding Coordinator
Fran Panek.....	Wedding Coordinator
Lisa Dean.....	Wedding Coordinator

Church Council

Sarah Reed.....	Moderator
Frank Cook.....	Moderator-elect
Jim Griffin/Melissa Prendergast.....	Secretary/Assistant
Ken Salak/David Holt.....	Treasurer/Assistant
Jim Fewlass.....	Administration
Deb Thompson/Catherine Cunningham.....	Church Growth/Ast.
Deana Armstrong/Julia Meyers.....	Education/Asst
Rick Sayre/Nancy Burba.....	House & Grounds/Assistant
Matt Allen/Chris Glaros.....	Mission/Assistant
Anne Hudson.....	Parish Life
Greg Halbe/Sharon Walquist.....	Music, Arts, Heritage/Asst.
Gerry Worth.....	Nominating Chair
Randy Hoffman.....	Trustees
Alfred Fields.....	Member-at-large
Mariner Taft.....	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: Monday, Feb. 4, 2013
TO:



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