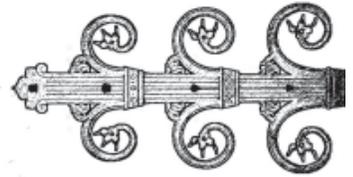


First Church News



First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ • Columbus, Ohio

Volume 157, Number 1
January 24, 2009

It Will Take Faith

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister



"You must do the things you think you cannot do" - Eleanor Roosevelt

On January 25, our church will make a transition into our new church year, with a new budget and new leaders. At our congregational meeting following our 10 a.m. worship service, we will thank those who have guided our program, budget and long-range vision for the work they have done. I especially am grateful for the leadership that Tom Stewart brought this church as our moderator for three years. He did this after a one-year stint as leader of our long-range planning process.

We know there are challenges ahead. We know there will be joys in which to delight as well.

Soon we will welcome a new music minister. We also will bid farewell to Rev. Lori Tisher, our Youth and Young Adult Minister. We will face decisions about how we will be able to serve and whom we will be able to serve. We will face decisions about land and mission, people and purpose.

We know our gifts of time and talent will need to be multiplied because our gifts of treasure are not what they used to be. We must and we will give our energy, enthusiasm, and vision more and more. We will come together to praise God in worship and we will go out to serve God in mission. Giving glory to God, we will share the love of Jesus Christ with others.

We face difficult days ahead. But, how we face them will determine who we really are. As Eleanor Roosevelt said to her beloved America during the depression, *"You must do the things you think you cannot do."* The Apostle Paul said that faith was that which was unseen.

We know it will take faith to reach out, to touch and to overcome all that is before us. Rabbi Abraham Heschel said, *"Faith is not an insurance, but a constant effort, constant listening to the eternal voice . . .to have faith means to justify God's faith in us."* Ernest W. Wadsworth wrote, *"Pray for a faith that will not shrink when it is washed in the waters of affliction."*

May God give us a significant measure of faith for the days ahead.

Myers-Briggs Seminar Planned for Feb. 7

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

Introverts and extroverts; sensors and intuitives; thinkers and feelers; judgers and perceivers. These four dichotomies compose the MBTI personality types. On Saturday, February 7, 9-11:30 a.m., Rev. Tim Ahrens will lead a workshop at First Church on Myers-Briggs personality types. A second session, designed for couples, will be held from noon to 2:30 p.m.

This workshop is open to anyone. However, everyone needs to answer the MBTI questions and have them scored before the workshop. The forms are available in the church office and must be returned by Feb. 1. To sign up, fill out the form in the church bulletin or in the church office. There is a \$5 processing fee for the seminar. If you have questions, email Rev. Ahrens at tahrens@first-church.org, or call the office at 228-1741.

In This Issue

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

From the Pastors

Using Your Own Intelligence

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



In these days of real struggle, we expect God to create a miracle without our help. I'm sure that is possible, but I'm also convinced that God has given us the tools through our own intelligence, and through universal intelligence, to create!

We may be in for a bigger downfall than we are prepared for to get us back on a track of creative power, since the energy of the whole world right now is so negative. Where does new creation begin? Everything starts from an idea or a thought, and then finds existence through an intangible seed of energy – Spirit! The creative power of our thoughts, words and actions gives form to the energy in the universe.

Life, breath and thought are energy. An unlimited supply of energy is all around us and is ours to shape. Whatever we radiate, we attract. There is such a mixture of thoughts and actions from differing ways of seeing the world that the energy of the universe must really be messed up at times (like right now).

I believe that whatever one expresses creates a channel for receiving. It is spiritual law. God promises that we have this power, but we don't believe it. We don't trust it. We possess the creative energy to "re-form" our lives, to reshape the world. Yet few of us truly believe that we have great possibilities. We are limited by our fear and lack of faith.

We do rely on other people to help us in this life. Sometimes the energy of the universe gets clouded because too many people have differing ways of seeing things, or simply fall short of believing or acting on their beliefs.

We also fear change and resist it because it threatens the order – or disorder – in our lives. Change always means leaving something or someone behind, and breaking with the past forces us to question deeply and do the work of recreating our lives.

We also create the things we don't want in our lives the same way – by holding negative images, ideas and thoughts in the mind and then affirming them verbally. Our negative thoughts create negative words that create negative actions! By harboring anger and pain, a person attracts those circumstances that keep that pain alive.

In these times, laughing and loving are so much better than grumpiness and hate!!!

Eye to Eye

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

A few years ago, there was a young man named Joe Carr who was working with the Christian Peacemakers Team (www.cpt.org) in Palestine. Before joining the Christian Peacemakers Team, Joe worked with the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) in Gaza.



On April 11, 2003, he witnessed an Israeli sniper shoot British ISM activist Tom Hurndall. Israeli authorities subpoenaed Carr to testify at the trial of the soldier accused of Hurndall's murder. Carr wrote this poem after the trial:

EYE TO EYE

*I came face to face with the man who killed my friend
Eye to eye we stood
And this time there was nothing to hide behind
No guard tower with tinted windows
No fluorescent jackets and megaphones
No Palestinian children
No commander's orders
Who am I, white boy from America
To testify against this poor young Arab* boy?
Who am I?
Eye to eye I faced him
Distaste erased, I wanted to embrace him
We should be drinking and flirting
Not playing with guns and fluorescent jackets
Sinking and hurting and hurting
"After the trial ya wanna go out for a beer?"
Oh yeah, you're stuck here.
"Well, maybe next time we're in Gaza
we can play on the beach."
See if our humanity is still in reach
Eye to eye we stood
He seemed ashamed and afraid
Now he pays the cost for the tax dollars I paid
And the landmines my government laid
I bought the gun and he pulled the trigger
How does it figure that I'm not on trial?
Perhaps I will be
Perhaps we all will be.*

* Arab bedouins sometimes serve in the Israeli military.

Five years after Joe wrote this poem, I was drawn back to it once again, as the fighting in Israel and Palestine has once again intensified. Join with me in praying for peace!

2009 Nominations for Church Offices

This is the slate of officers offered by the nominating committee for the coming year. The committee members included Patricia Pohlman, chair; Julie DeLong, Sue Cook, Bob Kutschbach, Joyce Oyler and Mark Williams, staff.

Members voted on these nominations during the annual meeting, held on Sunday, January 25.

Article XII, Section A of the Constitution of The First Congregational Church reads as follows: "Nominations for moderator, treasurer, deacons, trustees, commissioner, members-at-large, and chairperson of the nominating committee shall be made by the nominating committee. Public notice of these nominations shall be given by bulleting or letter at least two weeks prior to the annual meeting. Other nominations may be made from the floor at the annual meeting, provided that the consent of the nominee shall have been obtained. Only members of the Church shall be eligible to be nominated for elected positions."

The committee based the nominations upon recommendations by church members and in consultation with the moderator and staff. It presented the slate of nominees at the annual meeting, held on Sunday, January 25, 2009:

Position

Moderator
Secretary
Treasurer
Administration Commissioner
Church Growth Commissioner
Education Commissioner
House & Grounds Commissioner
Missions Commissioner
Parish Life Commissioner
Music/Arts/Heritage Commissioner
Adult Member-at-Large (2 years)
Youth Member-at-Large
Trustee (4 year)
Deacon (3 year)
Deacon (3 year)
Deacon (3 year)
Deacon (3 year)
Nominating Chair

Nominee

Melody Leidheiser
Carol Gallagher
David Holt
Frank Cook
Pavan Peter
Diana Kutschbach
Bill Rhoads
Anne Hudson & Fran Panek
Julia Myers & Amy Fulton
Shannon Washington
Doug Buck
Kim Kutschbach
Randy Hoffman
Mary Weaver
Charlie Weaver
Harry Guynn
Martha Huey
Joyce Oyler

All of the above are 1 year terms unless noted.

The committee met weekly beginning in October to develop this slate of nominees. We thank the staff and members of the congregation for submitting nominations. We thank the lay leaders listed above for their willingness to serve and believe they will work diligently on behalf of First Church.

Care and Prayer Circles

As church members, we are scattered all over the city! What a gift we give to each other by joining together, united on a common journey.

However, when we live all over the city, being together is more difficult. So we are taking the foundation that Rev. Ron Botts laid for us and continuing to connect in Care and Prayer circles by Zip codes.

We are attempting to make our large church a little more connected. We will need leaders in each geographic area, with primary responsibility to check in on their circle about once a month, and perhaps to gather the group together for fun, care and prayer. That person would help the clergy to know of the celebrations or concerns of the congregation, and be able to respond as needed.

I will be in touch with persons in each Zip code (some divided into two or three) in the very near future about leadership, ideas and training. This is not to add just one more thing to do, but to give us more of a sense of community and journeying together. I am excited about getting to know you better. - **Rev. Cunningham**

Web, email updates

The First Church Web site has a new page, found under the heading "News." The page includes up-to-date information on events. You also can find on the page a weekly calendar, information on Fellowship and Coffee Hour teams, the acolyte schedule and minutes of council meetings.

Email Addresses Changed: These are the new email addresses for three of our staff members: Rev. Ahrens, tahrens@first-church.org; Sharon Leidheiser, sleidheiser@first-church.org; and Marty Worth, mworth@first-church.org.

First Church Music & News

Music Notes

By Marti Rideout, Interim Minister of Music



January-February 2009 CONGREGATIONAL CONCERTS

January 25, 4 p.m. Early Music Concert

A concert of early music will honor the memory of Ben Bechtel, member of First Congregational Church and master harpsichord builder, and feature his final and magnificent harpsichord. Artists include David Robinson, harpsichord; Beth Owen and Susan Shaw, flute; James Bates, viola da gamba; and Robert Wisniewski, organ. Come and hear works by Couperin, Balbastre, Bach, Bruhns, Neusiedler, Froberger, Frescobaldi, and Clerambault.

February 22, 4p.m. Handbells Columbus!

Fourteen professional handbell ringers will delight the audience with six octaves of handbells and music for handbells and organ, including a newly-commissioned piece. Mark your calendars and plan to attend this unusual and exciting program.

Compline

The next evening service of Compline will be sung by the men of the First Church Choir on **Sunday, February 15**, at 9 p.m. During Compline the church is illuminated by candlelight and the choir sings unaccompanied

Ash Wednesday is February 25

Ash Wednesday begins Lent on February 25. On that day, we will have services at noon and 7:30 p.m. I hope you mark your calendars for this day. I will begin a seven-part sermon series titled "Jesus." During the series, I will explore the many dimensions of "the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord," as our UCC Statement of Faith says. In the coming weeks, the sermon series will be listed with titles. In addition, I will add a reading list of books on Jesus for you to explore on your own. If you have titles of books you love on Jesus, please email them to me (tahrens@first-church.org) or drop them off at the church. Thanks! - **Rev. Ahrens**

"Tent of Hope" to honor Bill Barndt

Bill Barndt, United Church of Christ minister and a well-known peace and justice advocate, will be honored during "Tent of Hope: A World in Which Many Worlds Fit" on Feb. 1.

The event will be held from 1:30 to 7 p.m. at the Noor Islamic Cultural Center, 5001 Wilcox Rd., in Dublin. It is open to anyone.

Bill, the father of First Church member Kathy Brownfield, died last year. He was a prominent Christian peace and justice advocate in central Ohio for many years. Many were inspired by Bill, who co-founded a number of organizations, including the Central Ohio Darfur Solidarity Network, Pastors for Peace, Central Ohioans for Peace, Worldwide Humanitarian Aid and Faith Communities Uniting for Peace. The event is being sponsored by those groups.



The day is designed to help participants learn what other groups are doing around peace and justice issues; to work toward new relationships that could lead to coalition-building; and to share a meal together (please bring bread or dessert).

Those planning to attend should RSVP to Sue Simon: 614-882-0043 or tofusue52@aol.com, or to Holly Church Wendell: 614-891-0222 or hchurchwj@aol.com.

Out for surgery - February 11-21

I will be out of the church from Wednesday, February 11, to Saturday, February 21. I will return to worship on February 22. I will have surgery on the 11th, which needs to be done. The recovery time recommended by my surgeon is two weeks. I ask you to keep me in your prayers. I will keep you in mine. - **Rev. Ahrens**

Stewardship Campaign Pledges Up 10% for 2009

By Wayne Piper, Stewardship Chair

Between September and December of 2008, First Church embarked on a stewardship campaign that logistically was a departure from past stewardship drives. With the assistance of consultant Bill Vanderwyden, members of the Stewardship Committee created a campaign aimed at increasing revenues, at the same time it reached out to members in a "grass-roots" manner.

In a short period of time, the committee created materials in the form of packets and informational letters that visually represented the campaign's theme, "Honoring Our Legacy; Empowering Our Future." The packets included a DVD produced by the committee that beautifully demonstrated the members and activities of the church and its spiritual vitality.

Committee volunteers sorted through and organized membership lists, sponsored a delightful (and instructive) volunteer luncheon and made numerous phone contacts and personal visits. Each Sunday during the campaign, members representing the diversity of our church gave eloquent testimonies from the lectern outlining the power of our church in their lives.

As a result, the campaign produced commitments in the amount of \$651,020, an increase of 10% over 2007's financial commitments.

During the first part of this year, the committee will continue to evaluate the process and its outcomes with the view of making recommendations to those who will launch the 2009-2010 campaign.

In addition to myself, the committee included Joe Daniels, Cindy Deliman, Marilyn Minter, Al Waddell and Joyce Ward. They truly worked faithfully and tirelessly on this project.



A Ministry for Everyone

By Sharon Leidheiser, Business Administrator

Did you know . . . we have a volunteer ministry at First Church with many talented members who help on a regular basis? However, more are greatly needed.

With the economy in a tailspin and budgets for our church being cut significantly in 2009, we need you to help us with our ministries and "nurturing ways" and to continue to keep us a beacon of excellence in our community. "God is Still Speaking" and I am speaking to you, the congregation.

We have several areas of volunteer ministry needing special care so we may continue the excellence our church has established. First Church could use volunteer angels in the following ministries: church ambassadors (ushers-greeters), bulletin board updaters, pew crawlers (help stock and clean the sanctuary), newsletter folders, music library helpers, finance and/or office assistants, phone and
(Continued on Page 7)



Good Sam Again in Need

By Marty Worth, Program Manager

On January 12, First Church held the first "Good Sam" day of the new year. We were overwhelmed with people seeking help. Ninety people were at the door, some having stood in line since 6:30 am. We were turning people away by 9:30 a.m.

In addition to the trustees' Good Samaritan Fund that gives us a quarterly payment of \$3,200 (down from \$3,350 last year), donations are received



Reach out to those in need

on special Mission Sunday offerings throughout the year. Over the course of 2008, individuals made several significant contributions that helped us meet the needs of so many. These donations are the cushion we need to function.

In December, we felt the first impact of the ramifications of the country's economic crisis. The church fund was completely depleted, as well as the quarterly allotment.

We cooperate with a number of agencies in the city of Columbus to provide assistance to those in need. The Good Samaritan Fund has the reputation throughout the city of willingly cooperating with others, if funds are available.

The Good Samaritan Fund will have several Sunday mission offerings in 2009. If you can help, your donations will be greatly appreciated.

Mailboxes have arrived

New mailboxes have been put up. Be sure to check to make sure there is one for you! If we missed you, let us know.

Notes From Christian Education

By Mark S. Williams, Director of Christian Education

Monday Night Lights Movie for Feb. 2 V for Vendetta



Vendetta is a controversial film that deliberately provokes questions of church and state. The Wachowski influence over the story line has heightened the controversy; Moore's moral ambiguity about the individual against society has been altered and the contrast magnified.

The commingling of criticism is explosive in a post-9/11 society. One of V's targets is a pedophile priest who supports the corrupt policies of the state. V resorts to terrorism against a state that uses religious rhetoric to justify its policies.

The Wachowskis have clearly chosen to use religious conservatism as the foil of their story, but the largest truths of the film are neither left nor right. The storyteller's need for heroes and villains should not eclipse insights into what it means to be spiritual.

Sociopolitical controversy is nothing new to the Bible or Christianity. Old Testament prophecy about the anticipation of Zion is as much a political statement as spiritual. Later Christian theologians would also rely on utopias and dystopias to explore the problems of community and socio religious life. Augustine's *The City of God* is offered in stark contrast to the "City of Man."

Jesus himself spoke much about the kingdom of heaven. In Jesus' parables about the kingdom, spirituality and social structures are so closely linked that the Roman government had to convict Jesus of a capital crime. Movies like *Vendetta* give contemporary Christians the opportunity to explore the genuine controversy of kingdom language.

Upcoming Monday Night Lights	
Date	Movie
March 2	An Inconvenient Truth
April 6	Brokeback Mountain

Christmas Play/Dinner a Success

Our Christmas dinner and children's play on December 14 once again provided a delightful evening of fellowship and entertainment. A special thanks to the Parish Life Committee for providing partial funding for the dinner along with

the Children's Education Committee. This dinner served over 200 attendees. Many thanks to the organizational skills of Robyn Petras, Gerry Worth and the entire committee!

The children did a great job in presenting their rendition of yet another facet of the Christmas story – from the marching little feet as the younger singers took the stage, to the actors, to the scenery and set design. Everyone had fun and the play was a "rootin', tootin', hifalutin', high plains Christmas tale." The children presented a wonderful western tale that brought the Christmas story to life.

A huge thank you goes to Andrew Welsh-Huggins, who wrote and rewrote the play to try to include all of the children and also directed. Also to Barb Mason who served as assistant director. Cory Rowley and Bill Rhoads designed, made and hung the background scenery.

Jenny Provenzano directed the young choir members and marshaled them on and off the stage. Tom Stewart provided piano accompaniment. Leslie Fulford, Ellen Borin, Diana Kutschbach and Sondra Kesler served as assistants to the director.

There were over 46 children between the ages of 4 and 12 who ministered to those in attendance. They did a great job sharing their knowledge, excitement and enthusiasm for the celebration of Christ's birth with this congregation. THANK YOU!

Winter Christian Education Offerings

Adult Education is going strong this winter quarter with exciting and informative classes. A special thank you to Kristi Thompson and Deana Armstrong for facilitating the series "Pausing on the Road to Bethlehem" during Advent.

At the distribution of this newsletter, a wonderful two-part series has concluded on "Race in the UCC," facilitated by Carrie Keller. Many thanks to Carrie for this informative series.

In February, we will "warm up" with an in-depth look at Catalyst, our educational/mission outreach program to promising, though financially limited, youth in Jamaica.

The final two Sundays in February will address what it really means to be an "open and affirming" church. First Church has been open and affirming since 2002, and we will look at how and why we continue to discuss what that means both in our church and the UCC. Guest speakers from the UCC and Coalition will present.

YAYA Ministry

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

Youth Sunday

Feb. 8, 2009 is Youth Sunday at First Church! Come to the 9 or 11 a.m. worship and experience meaningful worship led by the youth of First Church.



Cabaret

March 28, 2009, 7-9 p.m. First Church youth will be hosting a cabaret night in the Parish Hall as a fundraiser. It will be a fun evening of food, entertainment and fellowship. If you want to perform or help with preparations, talk with the youth ministry team. Tickets will go on sale soon! Adults: \$12, kids: \$10.

High School Ski Trip

The high school youth group will be going on a trip to Mad River Mountain Ski Resort, near Bellefontaine. We will leave First Church at **6 p.m. on Sunday February 15**, spend the night at Pine Lake Lodge near the ski resort, and spend all day Monday skiing, tubing, snowboarding, etc. We will return to First Church at **8 p.m. on Monday** (President's Day no school). The trip costs \$50 per person. **Money and permission slips** are due by **February 1**.

Middle School Pilgrim Hills Retreat

The UCC Central Southeast Association of Ohio will be hosting a winter middle school overnight event at Pilgrim Hills Camp on **February 20 and 21**. It will be a weekend filled with fun! Meet at First Church to carpool at **5:30 p.m. on Friday**. We will return by **5 p.m. on Saturday**. Cost: \$35 per person. Scholarships available. **Money and permission slips are due by February 1**.

Pub Theology

February 10, 7 – 9:30 p.m., Red Door, 1736 W. 5th Ave. First Church young adults will gather in the community – at the Red Door in Grandview – for an informal evening of dinner, relationship-building and connecting with one another, while also discussing a hot topic issue. In February, we will be discussing race. Throughout our discussion, we will begin to embrace the difficult task of recognizing, naming and confronting the many realms in which we experience racism – personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural. We also will begin to explore our responsibility in creating and nurturing change. Come for an exciting evening of fellowship and discussion!

(Volunteers, continued from Page 5)

desk greeters, security monitors for Sunday services/large events, outside gardeners, relationship communicators for our community, flower delivery and more.

All areas of our programming have been cut financially and we want to keep programming at the high standards, you as members expect, without increasing costs.

Staff to contact if you are interested in helping as a volunteer with our ministries at First Church:

Member & Outside Visitor Ministry: Denny Mahoney or Sharon Leidheiser

Finance Ministry: Sharon Leidheiser

Music and Good Samaritan Fund Helpers:

Marty Worth

Education Ministry: Mark Williams

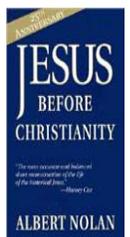
Pastoral Care Ministry: Barbara Cunningham

Take care of the Building Ministry: Stan Parron

Please call the church and ask for the staff person who handles the ministry you want to help. Thank be to God for taking the initiative to help with the church's ministry and programs.

Book Study Continuing

The Rev. Tim Ahrens' latest book study is under way. The Wednesday morning discussion group is examining *Jesus Before Christianity* by the Rev. Albert Nolan. It is held the first and third Wednesdays of the month in the parlor from 11 a.m. to noon, and continues until the end of March.



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

The book can be ordered in the church office. The cost is \$15. For more information, call the office at 228-1741.

News & Missions

Bethlehem on Broad Again Brightens Holidays

By Arlene Reynolds, BOBS Coordinator

Bethlehem on Broad Street had another successful year in 2008, as we served well over 1,000 needy people, with the help of more than 1,000 volunteers, including more than 400 from First Church.



At Project Help, the clothing, food and toy ministry, over 200 people lined up for clothes, food and toys on December 6. Sandy Water-Holley and her board were grateful for the \$1,500, the volunteers and prayers that BOBS contributed. Later, Project Help brought stuffed animals, toys and children's clothes for the gifts for our Christmas Day party.

On December 22, at the Broad Street United Methodist Church food box giveaway, nine United Methodist Churches brought in over 1,400 food boxes, with gift certificates for the perishables. Volunteers welcomed the families, and gave out pictures taken with Santa, provided music and entertainment. BOBS contributed \$1,500 toward this event.

When our Mission Endowment contributed \$500 to BOBS, Bruce Panek found out that we could use it to obtain about 3,000 pounds of canned goods and potatoes from Mid-Ohio Food Bank.

We sorted and distributed over 100 bags to needy families and homebound seniors. We were thankful for the 33 turkeys that the Thom Smith family contributed. Project Help brought two loads of canned goods.

On Christmas Day, we served about 1,000 meals in the Parish Hall. The day started with hot coffee and cocoa and welcoming in the tent, and a communion service and more hospitality in the sanctuary. Then came Santa for the children and gifts, toiletries and free telephone calls for the teen-agers, men and women.

The planning committee appreciated the 132 turkeys and many pastries given by: St Mary Catholic Church and Pope John XXIII Catholic Church in Groveport, Church of the Messiah United Methodist Church, Westerville, and St. Michael Church, Worthington, as well as from individuals from our church. A big thanks to all our cooks.

Thanks to Westerville Community Church and St. Michael for the many sock and underwear gifts. Thanks for the toys, including Immaculate Conception Jesus' Birthday Party and toiletries. Thanks for the beautiful poinsettias from DeMonyes and Straders, which went home with everyone.

Also we want to thank everyone for the financial donations from our three Sunday offerings, and the half of the offering from the donations at Lessons and Carols. This year we gave most of the men, women and teen-agers' \$10 gift certificates. Worthington Presbyterian Church has already sent us \$1,000 toward gift certificates next year.

Natalie Wright and Sharon Leidheiser state that BOBS took in over \$17,000 dollars in 2008. We intend to keep \$12,000 in a CD to pay for next year expenses.

The planning committee was very grateful to the 30 young people and 10 parents who came on December 22 to assist in the preparation of: wrapping gifts, cutting up bread, onions and celery for the stuffing, baking and decorating cookies, sorting toiletries and baby clothes, making luminaries and designing posters for the shelters. Gerry Worth and Robyn Petras cooked a great lunch, and Robyn and Mike Petras made the arrangements.

Most of all, a special thanks to Sondra Kesler for all her work in scheduling the volunteers.

Recent Celebration Gifts to First Church

By Bill Johannes and Jane Werum

Given to the Church Expansion Endowment Fund by:

**Sheldon Taft
Russ Kelm and Pam Kallner**

Given to the Dorinda K. White Endowment Fund by:

Jim Kyle

Given to the Remembrance Fund in celebration of the life of Wallace Cannon by:

**Elaine Warren
Ruth Allred**

Given to the Remembrance Fund in celebration of the life of Ben Bechtel by:

Elaine Warren

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

Fellowship Hour Beverage Sales:

Coffee and tea sales will be available on February 1 and 15 during fellowship hour. This is a UCC coffee project initiative and your participation is greatly appreciated. If you miss the regular sale, call Nancy Burba on Wednesdays in the church office at 614.228.1741, ext. 28.





Interfaith discussion set for January 31

First Church will join with Congregation Tifereth Israel and the Islamic Center of Central Ohio in a lecture and discussion on interfaith dialogue on Saturday, January 31. The event is free and will be held at Tifereth Israel, 1354 E. Broad St., at 8 p.m.



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

For information, call Tifereth Israel at 253-8523.

Spirituality Network Events Scheduled

The Spirituality Network is sponsoring these events, including two here at First Church:

Thirsting for Creativity: ARTI GRAS! Celebration of Art and Spirit

Saturday, February 28, 9 a.m.- 4 p.m.
Hosted by Maple Grove United Methodist Church, 7 W. Henderson Rd., Columbus.
Suggested donation: \$25 includes all materials and lunch funded in part, by a grant from Greater Columbus Arts Council.
Call 614-228-8867 or email spiritnetwk@hotmail.com for more information.

Connecting in the Spirit Contemplative Prayer "An Invitation" led by Dee Fontana, based on Oriah

Mountain Dreamer's poem *The Invitation*.
Thursday February 5, 7 - 8:30 p.m.
First Congregational Church, 444 East Broad St.
Free - All are welcome - RSVP: 614-228-8867 or email spiritnetwk@hotmail.com

Sacred Feminine Group Exploring Celtic Prayer, led by Linda Bixby

February 10, 2 - 4 pm
at First Congregational Church, 444 E. Broad St.
Suggested Donation: \$5 - RSVP: 614-228-8867 or email spiritnetwk@hotmail.com
Celtic Christianity embraces the presence of God in all things. Using material from Celtic theologian and author J. Philip Newell, we will chant, pray, and spend time in holy silence together.

Member Happy February Birthdays

2/1:	Charlie Cook	2/16:	Peggy Alexander
2/1:	Kyle Storey	2/16:	Tom Farquhar
2/2:	Nathan Bennett	2/16:	Col. William Owen
2/2:	Sophia Polo	2/16:	Dick Ward
2/4:	Randy Hoffman	2/17:	Tyler Reid
2/4:	Matt Castle	2/17:	Jean Moran
2/5:	Ron Botts	2/17:	Rachel Henderson
2/5:	Ann McIsaac	2/17:	Craig Clay
2/5:	Debbie Yontz	2/18:	Kathryn Kiernan
2/5:	Anne Morgenstern	2/20:	Erik Mitchell
2/6:	Marjorie Smith	2/20:	Elaine Borling
2/7:	Jane Carter	2/21:	Joe Lane
2/8:	Aidan Tansey	2/23:	Annie Cooke
2/9:	Jim Griffin	2/23:	Gleva Stephens
2/9:	Helen Cook	2/24:	Alice Bowden
2/9:	Lindsey Aldrich	2/24:	Kevin Cubick
2/9:	Tim Ahrens	2/24:	Lola Edwards
2/9:	Dan Snyder	2/25:	Julia Myers
2/9:	Ken Storey	2/25:	Mike Koscher
2/9:	Alyssia Palmer	2/25:	Joanna McWilliams
2/10:	John Matney	2/25:	Betsy Braverman
2/11:	Peter Brown	2/25:	Sam Gordon
2/11:	Jazmyn Daines	2/25:	Georgia Swinger
2/12:	Mark Leidheiser	2/26:	Matt Fullemann
2/13:	Jason Brant	2/26:	Marc Lowy
2/14:	Becky Ackford	2/27:	Nancy Russell
2/14:	Grace Glaros	2/27:	Jon Amy
2/14:	Bob Kutschbach	2/28:	Melva Fisher
2/15:	Ellen Braverman	2/28:	Connie Johnson
2/15:	Herb Goetz	2/28:	Tammy Alexander

Member Happy Anniversaries

2/5	Kris and Richard Brant
2/15:	Judy and Grehard Wolff
2/16:	Amy and Bill Wagner
2/17:	Anna and Mark Jensen
2/18:	Sallie and Karl Dannenberger
2/19:	Cami Curren and Thom Smith
2/20:	Jan and Bill Kutschbach
2/22:	Julie Parsons and Roger Fox
2/26:	Jan and Greg Halbe

OOPS! We missed these birthdays in recent issues: Mattes Brown on December 25; and Jack Koscher and Aryn Mason on January 25.

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

Mission Offerings Schedule

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

- February 1 - Good Samaritan**
- February 8 - Back Bay Mission**
- February 15 - United Church of Christ GLBT Coalition**
- February 22 - Deep Griha**

Church Calendar

Sunday, January 25

9 am - Treble Choir - Choir Rm
9 am - First Church Choir - Gallery
10 am - Worship Service - San
11 am - Annual Meeting - San
4 pm - Congregational Concert - San
5:15 pm - Concert Reception - PH

Tuesday, January 27

7 pm - Deacons meeting - LC

Wednesday, January 28

7 pm - Young Adult Ministry - Rm D

Thursday, January 29

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

Sunday, February 1

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

Monday, February 2

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

Tuesday, February 3

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

Wednesday, February 4

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

Thursday, February 5

6:15 pm: First Church Handbells - Bell Rm
7 pm - Choral Society - PH
8:30 pm - First Church Choir - Choir Room

Saturday, February 7

10 am - Youth Sunday practice - San
6:30 pm - Young Adult Dinner Group - Black Creek Bistro

Sunday, February 8 (Youth Sunday)

9 am - Early Worship Service - PH
9 am - Nominating Committee - PFR
9 am - Treble Choir - Choir Rm
10 am - Education Hour
11 am - Worship Service - San
12 pm - Fellowship Hour - PH

Tuesday, February 10

6 pm - Music Committee - PR
7 pm - Trustees - PR

Wednesday, February 11

9 am - Staff Meeting - PR

Thursday, February 12

6:15 pm - First Church Handbells - Bell Rm
7:15 pm - Choral Society - PH
8:30 pm - First Church Choir - Choir Rm

Friday, February 13

3:45 pm - Parents for Others - Toddler Room

Saturday, February 14

10 am - Quilters at First Church - LC

Sunday, February 15

9 am - Early Worship Service - PH
9 am - Treble Choir - Choir Rm
10 am - Education Hour
10 am - First Church Choir - Choir Rm
11 am - Worship Service - San
12 pm - Fellowship Hour - PH
12:30 pm - Confirmation class - Rm D
6:30 pm - Youth Group Winter Retreat - Mad River Mountain

Monday, February 16

6 pm - Stephen Ministers - Adult Library
6:30 pm - Youth Group Winter Retreat - Mad River Mountain

Tuesday, February 17

7 pm - Council - LC

Wednesday, February 18

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

Thursday, February 19

6:15 pm - First Church Handbells - Bell Rm
7:15 pm - Choral Society - PH
8:30 pm - First Church Choir - Choir Rm

Saturday, February 21

10 am - House and Grounds - LC

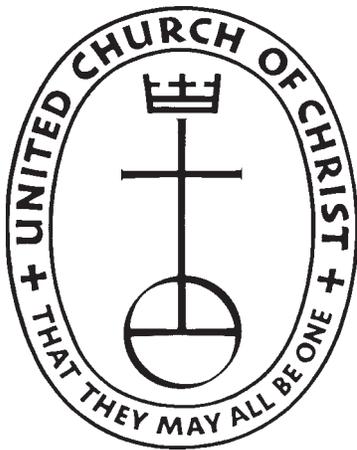
Sunday, February 22

9 am - Early Worship Service - PH
9 am - Nominating Committee - PFR
9 am - Treble Choir - Choir Rm
10 am - Education Hour
10 am - First Church Choir - Choir Rm
11 am - Worship Service - San
12 pm - Fellowship Hour - PH
4 pm - Congregational Concert - San
5:15 pm - Concert reception - PH
6 pm - Youth Group - Middle School room

Prayers

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

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.



New Members

Those who joined First Church on December 21:

Pat Liebchen; James and Mary Day Fewlass; Tom and Deborah Thompson; Melanie and Mark Edward Brown; Hope Hacker; Rhonda Poirier; Jessica Rannow; Scott Sass; and Molly VanLerberghe

Marriages

January 3 - Paige Corbly and Adam Buffington

Baptisms

December 21 - Harold Barton Hacker and Hope Canfield Hacker

December 23 - Dawson James Cook, Jaxson Reid Cook and Lisa Ann Cook

January 11 - Carmen Alice Lanning

~ Remember Your Loved Ones ~
With A Dedication of Flowers
Contact Marty Worth at 614.228.1741, ext. 12,
mworth@first-church.org

February Fellowship Hour

February 1: Amos - Judy Smith
February 8: Colossians - Tom Brownfield
February 15: Corinthians - Nancy Burba
February 22: Daniel - Bev Cook
(Complete schedule online @ www.first-church.org)

February Acolyte Schedule

February 1: Jensen Allred & Cameron Wade
February 8: Michael Warrick & Nick Warrick
February 15: Katie Wagner & Ella Kosher
February 22: Jacob Kessler & Kyle Fulford

Next Newsletter Deadline

Articles Due: Monday, February 9 by noon
Email: dmahoney@first-church.org
Folding Team: Wed., February 18, 9 a.m.

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

Church Staff

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

Church Council

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

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

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

DATED MATERIAL - VERY IMPORTANT

*Please Deliver: **Monday, January 26, 2009***

TO:



The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
444 E. Broad St. Col., OH 43215
Phone: 614.228.1741 FAX: 614.461.1741
Email: home@first-church.org 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