

# First Church News

First Congregational Church, UCC  
Columbus, Ohio

*"Enter to Worship - Depart to Serve"*

January  
2012  
Vol. 160,  
No. 1



## 'Christmas' in January and February

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

*"We have observed his star at its rising  
and have come to pay him homage."  
- Matthew 2:2b*



Recently, I was on the phone with a Muslim friend in Egypt. He was going to Germany to play soccer and was there around December 25. I told him Christmas in Germany is so beautiful. I said, *"You should really try to go to church and enjoy the fullness of the season."* He responded that he would be in and out of Germany **before** Christmas. *"No,"* I insisted, *"you will be there right at Christmas time."* He laughed and answered, *"Christmas is not until January 6 and I will be back in Egypt by then."*

He is right. Christmas IS January 6 in the Coptic and Eastern Orthodox tradition. Across the globe, many Catholic Christians have grand "12<sup>th</sup> Night of Christmas" or Epiphany celebrations.

Epiphany is the origin of gift-giving at Christmas time. With the arrival of the magi in Bethlehem, we know that Christmas has finally reached its conclusion. But wait! With the arrival of the magi, **the SEASON of Epiphany is just getting started.** As such, the gifts are just beginning to roll out. But, the gifts are not monetary or even physical. They are spiritual gifts. You can't package and sell these gifts. But if you open them, one text at a time, day by day, you will be blown away by the deepening of your faith.

These gifts come right from the heart of Holy Scripture. The texts of Epiphany tell of Jesus' baptism and his early ministry of teaching and healing. As you open the gift of these texts one by one for seven weeks, you will find "the best of Jesus." These are gifts of light, love, joy, peace, discipleship, stewardship, church mission and growth in faith.

Epiphany has arrived. Christmas continues. The star of Jesus is rising. Let us join the magi and pay him homage.



### January 29 Worship, Annual Meeting, Congregational Dinner

**Our 2012 annual meeting of First Congregational Church is called for Sunday, January 29, 2012, as stated in the Constitution.**

We gather as a congregation **for one service of worship at 10 a.m.** Immediately following, we will conduct the business affairs of our church together in the Sanctuary, led by moderator David Holt. Principal topics include election of officers and adopting a budget for 2012. Please note the time change for worship and plan to attend. The nursery will be staffed during the meeting. A congregational dinner will be served in Parish Hall following the meeting. Plans are being made for the meal.

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### What Will It Take?

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

"Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea-for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me....and immediately they left their nets and followed him." (Mark 1:16-18)



What would it take for you to drop everything and just go someplace? I don't even mean stop and run off to follow the Savior; or stop what you do for a living on the drop of a dime; or walk away from the safety of your home. I don't even mean just stopping by the kitchen counter and tossing your car keys there and walking out the door leaving the car behind a few times a week. I'm wondering what it would take for you to simply stop everything you are doing. What would it take?

What would it take for you to drop everything and follow Jesus, you know, that Reason-for-the-Season-Amazing-Savior-So-Fresh-From-God man? The One who tells us to stop and think before bursting forth with cranky or caustic words; or challenges us to make our to-do list and check it twice - making sure prayer and giving ourselves away for the betterment of the world are top on the New Year list. What would it take to drop everything and follow the One who calls us to come together and worship. What would it take?

What will it take?

Whatever it is, this is our call as children of the Living God. May we help each other this year, to respond to Gods amazing grace. I wish you a blessed New Year.  
Rev. Janine

### Newest Grapes on the Vine

By the Rev. Dr Janine Wilson, Associate Minister  
and Melissa Prendergast, Church Growth Commissioner

It is always a special privilege and joy to welcome new members into the fullness of life at First Congregational Church. Today is no different as I introduce you to our five members and children who joined the church two weeks ago.

**Bill Catus** is a chemistry editor at Chemical Abstract Services. He sings in the Columbus Symphony Chorus and the First Congregational Choral Society. He has an 11-year-old daughter, Rachael.

**Janice and Ron Cook** have been celebrating instrumental music with another musical group known well here at First Church – The Early Interval. Ron is particularly interested in Baroque and Renaissance music and writing poetry. Janice enjoys viola da gamba, recorder, voice and violin as well as playing and teaching music.

**Kim and Michael Hopcraft**, also became new members along with their two children, Dylan and Cassidy. Kim enjoys music and sings in our choir and Michael's interests include hunting and sports. All three families have been worshipping with us for a while, so you may even be surprised to discover they were not members.



We are delighted God has led you into this deepening of relationship with First Congregational Church. We look forward to getting better acquainted!

### Tom Brownfield to be Commissioned Minister for Social Justice on Jan. 15

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister

Thomas Brownfield will be commissioned as Minister for Social Justice on Sunday, January 15, during the 11 a.m. worship.

Tom has been a member of First Church all his life. He has served in every capacity of leadership in our church, including as moderator from 1999 to 2001. He also served the wider church as moderator of our Central Southeast Association and on our United Church Homes Board of Directors.

Once commissioned, Tom will be the only Minister for Social Justice in the United Church of Christ. We will have a great preacher in our pulpit that Sunday, which is Martin Luther King Jr. weekend. We welcome the Rev. Dr. Ervin Smith, the Washington Gladden Emeritus Professor of Social Ethics at the Methodist Theological Seminary in Delaware. Dr. Smith will connect the legacy of Dr. Gladden and Dr. King and their social gospel movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I encourage you to come and participate in this special and very sacred service of commissioning. We welcome Tom's friends and family who join us for this great event! Thanks be to God!

## 10 Signs That a Church is Healthy and Growing

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister

Last month I wrote on “How Churches Die.” Having offered the very last words ever spoken in worship after 175 years at Central Presbyterian Church, I was blown away by the challenge of “closing a church.” I said I don’t ever want to do that. Moreover, I want to see First Church grow, blossom and flourish in downtown Columbus.

### Here are 10 signs of a healthy and growing church:

1. *A friendly church is a growing church!* Churches grow because people bring their friends and family. When we bring friends and family, churches become places that feel close and loving and intimate.
2. *A praying church is a growing church!* Churches grow when people pray for the health and well-being of members, staff, and neighbors around the corner or across the globe.
3. *A learning and teaching church is a growing church!* When we stop reading, listening and learning, no matter what our age, we stop maturing as Christians. From cradle to grave, a church grows when the program life of Christian education stretches and develops people in the faith.
4. *A giving church is a growing church!* Does every member give money, time AND talents to the church? A growing church has all three from most or all of its members.
5. *A growing church is a mission church!* Does the church DO “hands –on” mission and support the mission of local, regional, national and global ministries? If the answer is “Yes,” it also will be a growing church.
6. *A growing church figures out how to deal with conflict in healthy ways.* I see churches that talk openly and honestly about their struggles to be churches that grow and flourish. Like healthy family systems, healthy churches talk with one another openly and with clear and loving minds and spirits.
7. *A clean and cared-for church is a growing church!* Churches grow when people take care of the space they have. Are the roofs solid? Do the walls leak? Are the floors polished and swept? Are the walls painted? Is the place dusted and clean? People notice. Growing churches are clean and cared for.
8. *New leaders are called forth and nurtured in a growing church!* Years ago, Michelle Paullo became our youngest-ever senior deacon. She was in her 20s. As Michelle grew more and more pregnant with her first daughter, Elysia, I remember her pouring the water of baptism while about to give birth herself. Wow! Here

was a young woman showing leadership at such a young age. She was excellent leader. Growing churches have excellent young leaders.

8. *Growing churches add more and more people to their ministries and then to their membership.* Sometimes we get it backwards. We think people will join our church and then get active. But growing churches welcome people to programs, small groups and worship and then to their membership. That is why I always say bring friends, family, co-workers and neighbors.

9. *Members of growing churches come to worship 2-4 times each month.* It is a priority to worship each week. You get up. You come to church. Worship begins each week the right way.

10. *Most important of: All growing churches are loving churches.* The love of God is ever-present in growing churches.



First Church celebrated with a cake and reception on November 20 as it presented Sarah and Wally Giffen with this year’s Lay Leadership Award.

## Cookie Mission Thank You

A big thank you to all who baked cookies, filled tins and delivered cookies. We had over 100 tins filled and delivered 45 to shut-ins and other members of First Church.

We also provided cookies to the men who live at the YMCA. Thank you for spreading Christmas cheer to those in need. – **Sharon Leidheiser**



On December 22, First Church young people helped get things ready for the Bethlehem on Broad Street celebration.

### Youth Groups Help With BOBS

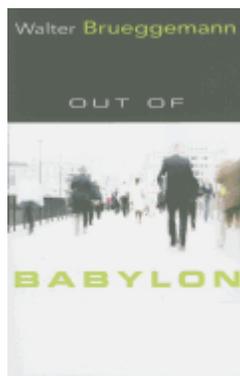
Over 22 middle and high school youth group members came bright and early on most of their first day of vacation to help wrap presents, stuff cards, cut celery and onions, pull bread and write messages of greetings for Bethlehem on Broad Street guests. Also, eight adults came to help with them. Thank you, youth groups!

Also, a big thanks to all who donated Christmas cards for Bethlehem on Broad Street project. It was a wonderful response from our church and other groups from Franklin County. Those who received the cards were very appreciative. What a blessing! – **Mark Williams**

### Book Study Group to Welcome New Year with Brueggemann Book

On Wednesday, January 4, at 11 a.m. in the Parlor, I will open a new book study with our great group of life-long learners. The book is *Out of Babylon* by Walter Brueggemann.

The book looks at our contemporary situation in America and compares it to the ancient texts of historical and prophetic writings. It is biblical. It is prophetic. It is timely as it addresses our contemporary situation while grounding us in the voices and the traditions of the great and ancient Hebrew prophets.



Dr. Brueggemann will be our 2012 Washington Gladden

Lecturer, coming the weekend of May 12-13. This is the first of many books by Brueggemann that we will study in the coming months. Don't miss it! See you in the parlor January 4!

Books will be available in the office for \$15. – **Rev. Tim**

### Happy 160<sup>th</sup> Birthday First Church!

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister

2012 is the 160<sup>th</sup> birthday of First Congregational Church UCC. On September 26, 1852, 42 abolitionist Christians founded the Third Presbyterian Church. In 1856, we changed our name to the First Congregational Church of Columbus. Our current name was embraced when we voted to join the United Church of Christ in 1961.

For 160 years in the heart of the capital city, we have faithfully served Christ. Our 42 adult members have grown to over 1,000 adult members. We have goals for the future to grow by 10% in the next three years. Let's get growing! To grow like this will take every man, woman and child of our church bringing new folks and spreading the love of God in Christ Jesus to a city waiting for good news from Christians of good will.



God has richly blessed us through the years. We have ministered and cared for tens of thousands of people in Columbus and far beyond this city and region. Thanks be to God!

Ten years ago we had a special 150<sup>th</sup> celebration. This year, we will welcome guest preachers and a Gladden lecturer to reflect on themes of creation, justice and the social gospel movement for today. Moreover, this can be the year we strengthen the church's finances, building, endowments and our future hold in the heart of this great city.

2012 is also the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of Columbus, which begins on February 14. We will join with the whole city in celebrating our connections this year. Let's make 2012 the best year in our church's history. **Happy 160<sup>th</sup> birthday First Church!**

## Deep Griha Potluck is February 20

By Valerie Stichter

The annual potluck dinner with entertainment and reports on the latest news from Deep Griha in Pune, India, will be earlier than usual this year. Please save the date for this festive celebration of Neela Onawale's work with and for the people living in huge slum areas of the large city of Pune, as well as in the rural area just outside the city. Those who met Neela when she was here this fall will be particularly inspired by spending an evening with so many others who support her work.

**Sunday, February 12, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.** at the North Campus of First Community Church we will gather with members of First Community Church, Dublin Community Church and others who may have visited the many Deep Griha Society missions in Pune.

As always, this event is open to anyone in Columbus who is interested in the work being done by Deep Griha or those who sponsor a child for \$220 to provide the basics of nutrition, education and medical services for one year.

"Making a Real Difference" will be the topic of a talk by the Rev. Deborah Lindsay of First Community, who has now been to Pune twice and been deeply touched and impressed with the amazing work being done there to uplift the lives of those who have so little and helping them become educated, healthy and effective contributing members of society.

This year's event falls just shortly after members of DGUSA return from a trip to Pune so it will be exciting to hear about their trip following the dinner.

Reservations are not required but are greatly appreciated. There is no cost, but those attending are asked to bring one a potluck dinner dish that can serve eight to 12 people.

Those whose last name begins with the letters A-H are asked to bring a dessert; I-R bring a salad; and S-Z a main dish. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Valerie Stichter at 885-0730 or [stichter@columbus.rr.com](mailto:stichter@columbus.rr.com) so we will have adequate tables set up for the dinner.

*'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 21 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 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. That is too long! Too often, you and I take it for granted that we are open and affirming. This year, we celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary as 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.

Next month, I will take two weeks of preaching to address the issues of homosexuality in the Bible and in the church universal in the series "It's About Time." 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 for these dates: February 12 - "Homosexuality and the Bible: No More Bible Beatings Allowed!"; February 19 - "Homosexuality and the Church: A 21st Century Transfiguration Story!"

Don't Forget!

January 3

First Tuesdays Concert and Luncheon

Beginning at 12:15 p.m.

## The Church at the Crossroads

By James Fewlass, Treasurer

2012 is shaping up to be a major transitional year at First Congregational Church.



- A long range plan has been voted and studied. Some commissions have already based their budget requests on the goals of the long range plan.
- A compensation study has been completed and the challenge of compensating the church staff at median+ reflecting our church attendance and finances is influencing the 2012 budget development.
- Our 80-year-old facility is in need of comprehensive renovation to keep warmth in and water out. Stonework, tuck pointing, window repair and insulation, scupper replacement, boiler replacement and ongoing maintenance and repairs are moving to the front burner for our attention. Some of this is covered in the capital campaign, but most will require funding beyond the campaign and endowments.
- The Mission Commission has requested the increase of Our Church's Wider Mission commitment. We have slipped to 6.5% in recent years. The request is for 8.5% this year of the total pledges to the operating budget. The goal for future years is a tithe or 10 percent. In addition, the Mission Commission will facilitate a study of OCWM to re-educate the congregation about OCWM and the United Church of Christ denomination work at all levels.
- Meanwhile, people knock at our door every day for assistance in the face of severe poverty, injustice and lack of help elsewhere.

The five bullet points above are not choices, nor are they independent issues that can be resolved apart from each other. I wrote at the beginning that 2012 is a transitional year. First Congregational Church is a living, breathing organism – in less scientific but more theological terms – the Body of Christ in its local manifestation.

Business as usual in all of the areas mentioned above will not do. In order to remain alive and vibrant, we will need to meet the challenge of transitions in new and different ways than we do presently or have done in the past. As we hear what the Spirit is saying to the church, we will act in God's will.

## Monthly Budget Update

### Current Pledge Income

Pledges Budgeted -- \$529,872  
November Actual -- \$37,993.12  
YTD Actual -- \$454,208.23  
YTD Budgeted -- \$485,716  
Needed Each Month -- \$41,268.90

### November Mission Offerings

Mission 1 (Neighbors in Need  
East Africa Famine Relief) -- \$1,865.35  
Bethlehem on Broad Street -- \$2,638.33  
Faith Mission -- \$946.53

Other Mission Giving  
Good Samaritan -- \$1,045  
Mid-Ohio Food Bank (9-28 through 11-30-2011) -  
\$1,522.15



### Missions Offering Schedule

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

**January 1 - Gladden Community House**  
**January 8 - Church World Service Water Projects**  
**January 15 - UCC Justice Ministries**  
**January 22, 29 - TBA**

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday Group Meets January 12

The Second Thursday Fellowship will hold its first gathering of the new year on Thursday, January 12, at 10 a.m. in the Parlor. After refreshments, those present will offer a brief review of a book enjoyed in the past year (or longer). All are welcome.

*Deadline for the February newsletter is noon, January 20. Send your articles to [dmahoney@first-church.org](mailto:dmahoney@first-church.org)  
It will be published February 1.*





## Recent Gifts to First Church

By Bill Johannes and Jane Werum

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



Given to Pastors Fund by:  
**Shannon and Christopher Washington**

Given to Starr-Wingfield Furnishings Fund by:  
**Rupert D. "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.*



The First Church Card Care Ministry hosted a holiday luncheon for staff members December 6. To all those who made it so enjoyable, the staff says thanks!

## Kroger Rewards Help First Church

Do you want to help the church make money towards missions and programs? Do you have a Kroger card? Do you shop at Kroger?

If you answered YES to those questions see Jim Fewlass, David Holt or Sharon Leidheiser and ask about signing up to earn the church Kroger Community Reward dollars. It's FREE and does not affect the gas discount you may normally get.

– Rev. Tim

## Member Happy January Birthdays

1: Priscilla Mondiek	16: Lisa Warrick
2: Amos White	17: Ben Wiant
2: Gerry Worth	19: Jordan Cole
3: Rick Welch	20: John Deliman
4: Sarah Giffen	20: Yan Ke
4: Jorge Polo	20: Mike Henderson
4: Mark Williams	21: Rebecca Sterrett
4: Matt Allen	22: Hope Hacker
4: Jordan Knerr	24: Joyce Ward
4: James Knerr	24: Sarah Lange
5: James Woodard	24: Kevin Butler
5: Tom Hadley	25: Aryn Mason
5: Chris Rosati-Yoos	26: Gunter Garbe
6: Taimur Chaudhri	26: Julie Stewart
7: Harry Guynn	27: Janet Younger
7: Gary Gray	27: Tanya Miller
8: Brad Keely	28: Ben Lightbourne
8: Michael Bishop	28: Teresa Polo
9: Carl Gelfius	28: Katie Kutschbach
9: Amy Nosse	29: Jane Ward
11: Ray Pendell	29: Tom Brownfield
11: Roger Sankey	29: Martha Fullemann
11: Jon Wilson	29: Sarah Mitchell
12: Linda Mumford	29: Wayne Henry
12: Patrick Keller	29: Amy Fulton
13: Jim Fewlass	31: Hamish Baird
13: Eddie Fleurant	31: Michelle Paullo
13: Abby Cave	31: Laura Collins
13: Kendra Worley	
14: Katie Waller	
15: Thom Smith	
16: Dee Sturgill	

## Member Happy January Anniversaries

3: Sondra and Wally Kessler
4: Kristi Thompson and Stanley Myers
5: Malini Gnanatheeban and Pavan Peter
6: Deena and David Bowers
9: Barbara and David Knox
16: Carol and James Woodard
25: Marilyn and George Minter

**OOPS!** If we miss your birthday or anniversary, contact Denny Mahoney at 228-1741, ext. 17, or [dmahoney@first-church.org](mailto:dmahoney@first-church.org).

## Gladden Grateful for Gift Cards

Gladden Community House staff expressed their gratitude for the gift cards contributed by members. Some of the cards were added to the food baskets that were given to the senior citizens who live in the Gladden area. Other cards were given to teens served by Gladden. – Dawn George

# Calendar

## Sunday, January 1

9 am – Worship – PH  
10 am – Choir – Sanctuary  
11 am – Worship – San  
12 pm – Fellowship Hour – PH

## Monday, January 2

**News Year's Day Observed – Building Closed**

## Tuesday, January 3

12:15 pm - Tuesdays at First Concert - San  
12:45 pm – Tuesdays at First Luncheon – PH  
1:30 pm – Card Care Ministry – LC  
5:30 pm – Sacred Earth – LC  
7 pm – Budget/Finance-Council Meeting – LC  
7 pm – Education Committees – Room D  
7 pm - -Mission Committee – PFR

## Wednesday, January 4

11 am – Book Study – Parlor

## Thursday, January 4

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

## Sunday, January 8

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

## Monday, January 9

7 pm – Trustees – LC

## Tuesday, January 10

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

## Thursday, January 12

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

## Saturday, January 14

10 am – First Church Quilters – LC

## Sunday, January 15

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, January 16

**Martin Luther King Day – Building Closed**

## Tuesday, January 17

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

## Wednesday, January 18

11 am – Book Study – Parlor

## Thursday, January 19

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

## Friday, January 20

12 pm – Newsletter Deadline

## Saturday, January 21

9 am – House and Grounds - PFR

## Sunday, January 22

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  
6 pm – Sonreir – PH

## Monday, January 23

7 pm – Budget and Finance - LC

## Tuesday, January 24

12 pm – Card Care Ministry- LC

## Thursday, January 26

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

## Sunday, January 29

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

## Tuesday, January 31

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

## Upcoming Sermons

### **January 1 - Christmas 1**

(Communion services at 9 and 11a.m.)

Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6;

Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6;

Matthew 2:1-12

Communion Meditation: "Herod's New Year's Resolution"

### **January 8 - The Baptism of our Lord**

Readings: Psalm 29; Genesis 1:1-5; Acts 19: 1-8,  
Mark 1:4-11

Baptismal Meditation: "Baptismal Boldness"

### **January 15 - Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend**

Sermon: Guest Preacher, Rev. Dr. Ervin Smith, Emeritus  
Washington Gladden Chair of Social Ethics at Methodist  
Theological School in Delaware, Ohio

### **January 22 - Third Sunday of Epiphany**

Readings: Psalm 62:5-12; Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Mark 1:14-20  
Sermon: "Defining Moments"

### **January 29 -Congregational Meeting**

One service at 10 a.m.

### **Fourth Sunday of Epiphany**

Readings: Psalm 111; Deuteronomy 18:15-20;  
Mark 1:21-28

Sermon: "Listening to God' Calling"



## January Fellowship Hour

January 1: Ephesians  
 January 8: Galatians  
 January 15: Haggai  
 January 22: Hosea  
 January 29: Jeremiah

## January Acolyte Schedule

January 1: Cameron Wade and Luke Zimmerman  
 January 8: Jansen Allred and Will Zimmerman  
 January 15: Joe Spofforth and Cameron Wade  
 January 22: Luke Zimmerman and Emma Rau  
 January 29: Sarah Ahrens and Merry Roach  
 (Schedules online at [www.first-church.org](http://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](mailto:tahrens@first-church.org).

*Please pray for those who continue to walk through grief and loss, for those battling illness and addictions in their families, for all serving in Iraq and elsewhere and for others in need. Please offer prayers for those who are lonely, lost and hurting. Pray for our nation as we face all too much anxiety, fear and uncertainty with faith, hope and love. May God bless you in your giving and in your living in Christ's love and grace. Amen.*

## Fellowship Hour Beverage Sales



Coffee and tea sales will be available on January 1 and 15 during Fellowship Hour. This is a UCC coffee project initiative and your participation is greatly appreciated.

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

David Holt..... Moderator  
 Gerry Worth.....Vice-Moderator  
 Judy Smith, Bev Cook.....Secretary/Assistant  
 Jim Fewlass, Cindy Conn.....Treasurer/Assistant  
 Sandy Bennett, Neal Brower.....Administration/Assistant  
 Melissa Prendergast.....Church Growth  
 Tanya Miller.....Education  
 Wally Giffen, Charlie Weaver...House & Grounds/Assistant  
 Fran Panek, Bruce Panek.....Mission/Assistant  
 Jackie Dean, Abby Cave.....Parish Life/Assistant  
 Mary Weaver.....Senior Deacon  
 Elaine Warren.....Deacon  
 John Deliman, Jim Gallagher....Music, Arts, Heritage/Asst.  
 Melody Leidheiser.....Nominating Chair  
 Sheldon Taft.....Trustees  
 Emma Welsh-Huggins.....Member-at-large  
 Tom Brownfield.....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: Wednesday, January 4, 2012

TO:

[Empty dashed box for recipient information]



**The First Congregational Church, UCC**

444 E. Broad St., Columbus, Ohio 43215  
Phone: 614.228.1741 FAX: 614.461.1741  
Email: [home@first-church.org](mailto:home@first-church.org) Web site: [www.first-church.org](http://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