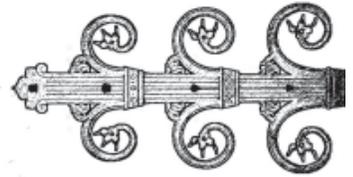


First Church News



First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ • Columbus, Ohio

Volume 157, Number 3
March 21, 2009

Holy Week at First Church

Passion/Palm Sunday, April 5

9 and 11 a.m. - Rev.

Timothy C. Ahrens will be preaching "Jesus and Moses."

Maundy Thursday, April 9

Family-friendly dinner in Parish Hall at 6 p.m. followed by communion. Tenebrae service at 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary.



Good Friday, April 10, noon

First Church and other downtown churches will worship together in our sanctuary.

Easter Sunday, April 12

7 a.m. - Sunrise Service (Art Museum front steps)

9 and 11 a.m. - Sanctuary

Rev. Ahrens preaching his sermon "Jesus Beyond Christianity."

10 a.m. - Parish Hall, breakfast brunch. Members and friends are invited to bring a hot dish or breakfast item to share. Sign-up is not necessary.

Special Events During Holy Week

April 5, 7:30 p.m.

The King of Kings

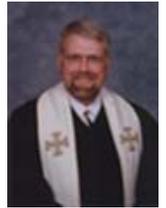
Presentation of Cecil B. DeMille's epic silent movie *The King of Kings*, with organ accompaniment.

Monday Night Lights, April 6, 7-8:30 p.m.

The movie *Brokeback Mountain* will be discussed, led by the Rev. Barb Cunningham. Mini-vacation Bible school for children; child care provided. The Art of Positive Parenting class at 7 p.m.

First Church Resurrection Stories Guide Our Way to Easter

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister



Grace Glaros, Jonah Kneuve and Alex Heer are living testimonies of resurrection faith. Each one is a child of First Congregational Church having been born, baptized and growing in the love and care of our congregation.

Each one faced life threatening challenges in their young lives and "rose" to overcome them. Each child has spent many hours of their young lives in Nationwide Children's Hospital under the care of nurses, general practitioners, surgeons, oncologists, audiologists and specialists, whose range of expertise has saved their lives.

Grace is 13 months old and has had nine surgeries since her birth and baptism at St. Ann's Hospital on Valentine's Day 2008. Born with spina bifida, Grace has been blessed with parents, Chris and Lauren, brother Lincoln (who just turned 4) and a great support system of family and friends, who have loved her into life while doctors have given her hope. Somehow, Lauren keeps teaching high school history and Chris is our state's First Assistant Attorney General. Their faith has deepened in the past year as Grace keeps rising in her young life!

(Continued on Page 2)

Help Us Help You

Please remember to contact the office when you need to schedule an event or meeting. We need to let our building staff know what events are planned to make sure you have access to the building, and so they can complete their work.

Contact Sharon Leidheiser (sleidheiser@first-church.org) or Denny Mahoney (dmahoney@first-church.org), or call the office at 228-1741.

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Making Sense of Life's Changes

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



times.

In 1980 I was given *Transitions – Strategies for Coping with the Difficult, Painful and Confusing Times in Your Life*, a book by William Bridges. It was so helpful to me, and putting it together with *The Power of Now*, by Eckhart Tolle, I came away with guidance that gets me through troubled

When we are in transition, it helps to deal with one day at a time – living in the moment. And it helps to recognize what we all go through in transition, whether it is good or bad.

Some of the changes we all experience are: **losses of relationships**, either living or in death; changes in home life – getting married, having a child, a spouse retiring, returning to school, moving or remodeling a house, increasing domestic tension; **personal changes**, getting sick, experiencing notable success or failure; **work and financial changes**, changing or losing a job, declaring bankruptcy; and **inner changes**, spiritual awakening, changing of inner thoughts and outward actions.

Bridges names three things in the process of transition: endings, the neutral zone and the new beginning. No matter what we go through there is an ending and a new beginning. What we often try to skip is the neutral zone because it is lonely and bland.

We try to jump too quickly to a new beginning without understanding what we have been through and give ourselves time to let go. When we hold on to the past we are not living in the present. Letting ourselves just “be” for awhile, and living in the moment, will let us heal, let us celebrate and let us prepare for that new beginning.

Does that make sense to you? It certainly gave me hope that I did not have to prepare a new beginning until I was ready. It gave me hope of healing. It has given me time to celebrate the wonder of an ending before I start a new beginning.

“Endings and beginnings, with emptiness and germination in between – that basic shape is so essential to growth that we must learn to recognize it in our lives,” Bridges writes.

I hope you will find this helpful to live in the moment as we all go through each of these processes of change. Change happens so fast, yet we can deal with it better if we are aware of our own inner self.

Prayer and Praise in Depressing Times

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister

The times we are currently facing are difficult times. At a meeting for the Justice Network Ministry last week, we heard that there were 10,000 foreclosures affecting 100,000 people in Franklin County by the end of 2008. That is one of every 10 people in our county.

As your pastor, I know many of you are facing excruciatingly difficult times. Members and friends have faced job loss, job dislocation, homelessness, lack of adequate health care coverage and more. I have listened and wept to hear your stories. I have taken your concerns and I lift them to God in my daily prayers. You are constantly on my mind and in my heart.

There are those who are reading this who have not been to church in some time. I pray for you as well. I “pray”
(Continued on Page 9)

(Rev. Ahrens, Concluded from Page 1)

Jonah Knueve is now 3. He is the youngest of three for Mark and Meredith Knueve; Jack and Luke are his older brothers. Jonah was born with such profound hearing loss he was declared deaf shortly after birth. Immediately, parents and doctors went to work.

Just before his first birthday, Jonah became the youngest child in Ohio history to have double cochlear implants which have given him an amazing opportunity to hear and speak. Both Meredith and Mark are attorneys who have used their legal skills, coupled with their amazing faith, to bring sound and life to Jonah!

Another of our red-headed resurrection stories is Alex Heer. Alex is now 13, but on Nov. 30, 2000, at 4½ years old, Alex was diagnosed with a form of leukemia.

Brother of Susie and the youngest child of Bill and Holly Heer, Alex went through a long series of treatments. In the end he was cancer free. Some may remember him as a theatrical star in our Christmas play a few years back. He also serves as an acolyte for our worship at 11 a.m. Alex continues to shine God's light! He is another real life resurrection story in our faith community!

As we prepare for the celebration of the resurrection, let us remember that resurrections from death to life, from insurmountable odds against survival, have been happening in our community of faith. Grace, Jonah and Alex are our vanguards of hope.

Each of us has a story of real life resurrection that has touched our lives. Let's share those stories as we worship and serve together at First Church!

First Church Adapting to Staff Changes

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens

With the departure of Rev. Lori Tisher in early February, staff and lay leaders are splitting up job assignments and preparing for the future. We are sorting out the needs of the congregation and our ability to serve you with fewer resources coupled with growing needs in our church family.

A plan for pastoral care and programming for all ages is being written. The plan will go to the Personnel Committee, the Executive Committee and then to the Church Council. Our intention is to have this plan before Council by late April at the soonest.

In March, the Music Minister Search Committee is conducting interviews and auditions with our three finalists for the position. This stage of the process is delicate and we ask for your prayers.

Our candidate will be selected and presented to the Church Council for their assessment and approval. The soonest this could happen is late March. On this schedule, our next music minister would probably arrive sometime after Easter, more likely in June or early summer.

Our church phone number remains 614-228-1741. Our full-time staff and responsibilities include: Rev. Tim Ahrens, senior minister (ext. 13, pastoral care, church administrative issues); Sharon Leidheiser, business administrator (ext. 11, financial, membership, scheduling matters); Denny Mahoney, office manager (ext. 17, newsletter, Web site, weddings); Mark Williams, director of Christian education (ext. 15, Monday Night Lights, Sunday education programs, new members, nursery); and Stan Parron, building and grounds manager (ext. 25).

Our interim music minister is Marti Rideout (ext. 14); Rev. Barb Cunningham is our minister of pastoral care, serving 3/4 time through 2009 (ext. 21, Stephen Ministers, deacons); Marty Worth is our program manager (ext. 12, bulletin, Good Samaritan Assistance, music program, flowers).

Otto Edwards is our security officer; our evening and weekend custodians are Frank Wall, Don Bell, Kelvin Murphy and William Lee; and nursery workers are Kelsey Weber, Jessica Yeager and Caroline Sansbury. There are no student interns this year.

2008 Music, Arts and Heritage Commission Annual Report

By Janet D. Wade

Interim Commissioner of Music, Arts and Heritage

Although Barbara Hunt was elected 2008 Commissioner and she served for the first three months of the year, her departure left the position open until September when Janet D. Wade, a former commissioner, agreed to serve in an interim capacity for the remainder of the year. The MAH Commission is comprised of the Music Committee, the Art Committee, the Remembrance Committee and the Archives.

Music Committee

Chaired by Tom Stewart, this committee assumes responsibility for all the support functions of Congregational Concerts, now in its 35th season. Ushering, providing and soliciting food, and setting up and serving post-concert
(Continued on Page 8)

First Church Gets Eco-Friendly with Palms

By The Sacred Earth Committee

This year on Palm Sunday, we will be using "eco-palms," which are palms that are harvested in a more sustainable way.

They come from communities in Mexico and Guatemala, where workers are paid fairly and where the harvesting methods protect the local ecosystem.

To learn more, simply Google "Eco-Palms."



Celebrate Earth Day on April 19:

Dispose of computers and high-tech equipment in an environmentally responsible way on Earth Day, April 19, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. A list of acceptable items is posted on the mission board. Sorry, no TVs can be taken. A truck will be in the parking lot and the youth will unload your car.

Paper Recycling Dumpster Needs

Your Business: Looking to do some spring cleaning? How about all those old magazines and paperback books you have been saving for years?

Bring them along with your other grocery sacks of newspaper and shredded mail to the church's paper dumpster for recycling. Please also note that **no corrugated or phone books** can be recycled in the dumpster.

CATALYST Needs Cameras

CATALYST is looking for a few good, gently-used digital cameras for use by our students in Jamaica.

Cameras should be in working order with instruction manuals and computer connection cables or memory cards. If you have a camera you would be willing to donate to an aspiring photographer in Kingston, contact Heather Biggers or Fran Panek.

Thank You!!

First Church Music

Music Notes

By Marti Rideout, Interim Minister of Music



Tuesdays At First Concert Series

12:15 p.m. - Concert in Sanctuary
12:45 p.m. - Luncheon in Parish Hall (\$5 donation)

March 17 - James A. Yeager, harpsichord
Professor and Director of Music, Pontifical College
Josephinum

March 24 - Paul Thornock, Organ
Director of Music, St. Joseph Cathedral

Compline

The next evening service of Compline will be sung by the men of the First Church Choir on **April 19**. During Compline, the church is illuminated by candlelight and the choir sings unaccompanied plainsong chant. The 30-minute service concludes with a quiet organ improvisation. Compline will be sung by the women on May 17. Due to budget restrictions this year, Compline will not be offered during the summer. If you have never experienced Compline before, come.

Sunday, March 29, 11 a.m. service *Illuminati* at First Church

Illuminati, an ensemble of the Columbus Gay Men's Chorus, will provide special music and support congregational singing at First Congregational Church on Sunday, March 29 at the 11 a.m. service. *Illuminati* performs sacred music in sacred spaces, such as churches, synagogues, mosques, or any location of religious or spiritual significance to its membership or congregation. *Illuminati's* mission is to increase awareness that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals have spiritual concerns and a place in the religious life of the community. *Illuminati* last performed at First Church during the 2008 Columbus Arts Festival.

Sunday, March 29, 4:00 p.m. The First Church Choral Society

The Choral Society will sing *A Hymn of Praise* by Felix Mendelssohn in honor of the 200th anniversary of his birth. The First Church Choir will sing additional works of Mendelssohn and Johann Sebastian Bach in the concert. This performance that will also include organ works by Mendelssohn with Jim Gallagher, conductor, and G. Dene Barnard and Marti Rideout, organists.

Sunday, April 5, 7:30 p.m. *The King of Kings* Clark Wilson on the organ

This Palm Sunday presentation of Cecil B. DeMille's epic *The King of Kings* will feature the shorter version of this silent film on a large screen,

accompanied on the Kimball Organ by Clark Wilson, highly acclaimed theater organist.

This special offering will prepare you for Holy Week, hearing the organ music and witnessing the film tell the events leading to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the greatest story ever told.

Sunday, April 19, 11 a.m. service Ohio Capital Winds

The Ohio Capital Winds, a champion of wind ensemble music, performs classic repertoire from masters such as Holst, Sousa, Grainger and Ohio's own Henry Fillmore.

The musicianship of the ensemble's 30-plus professional and semi-professional players is its hallmark. Under the leadership of Catherine Hope-Cunningham, a member of First Church, the Ohio Capital Winds will provide music leadership at this service.

Sunday, April 26, 4 p.m. Eric Plutz, organ

Our final concert of the 2008-2009 season will be an exciting recital of organ music by Eric Plutz, university organist at Princeton University and one of our country's finest performers. Mark your calendars now for this not to be missed concert.

Sunday, May 3, 4 p.m. Choral Evensong

The First Church Choir will celebrate the Easter season with Choral Evensong and to give thanks for the many supporters of music at First Church and the Congregational Concerts series.

The evening anthem will be *Hail, Gladdening Light* by Charles Wood and the setting of the *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis* in B-flat by Charles Villiers Stanford.

Trustees Looking to Committees for Advice

By Phil Stichter, Trustees Chairman

The trustees are exploring the idea of creating three committees to assist them in addressing various responsibilities that are set forth in the church's constitution.

One of those responsibilities is to "ensure that adequate insurance for the church and its activities and property is maintained at all times." Another responsibility is to "actively encourage members of the church to contribute to the endowment funds and to make special gifts." Finally, the "trustees shall invest funds . . . held by them" arising from these contributions and from "other funds as requested by council."

The trustees would like to consider involving more members of the church who have expertise, skills, or experience in any of the three areas outlined above. Both trustees and non-trustees would serve on these committees. They would be empowered to study matters relevant to their respective areas of concentration and to make recommendations to the entire board of elected trustees.

One committee might be the "risk management committee" that could focus, for example, on examining potential liability issues that the church might face; reviewing periodically the value of church property and its contents; or identifying possible steps to take to reduce the risk of future losses or minimize future maintenance risks.

The next committee might be called the "financial development committee" that could focus, for example, on providing educational seminars on planned giving and estate planning; or examining the use of charitable gift annuities, life insurance, or retirement assets as ways to donate to the church's endowment funds or to make special gifts.

The third committee might be called the "investment strategy committee" that could focus, for example, on analyzing different investment strategies that might be relevant at different times resulting from an ever changing economic environment; evaluating the performance of different asset managers; or studying "best practices" by charitable organizations with respect to the management of their investments.

All the areas mentioned above are discussed in varying degrees of frequency and breadth by your current trustees. However, the trustees are looking for viable ways to involve more of the talent that is in our congregation with regard to these three different areas.

Are the committee suggestions described above an appropriate way to proceed? Are there other or better ways that the trustees should examine? Do you have an interest in exploring your possible involvement in this process?

Please contact any of the trustees if you would like to share your thoughts and ideas with us. The current trustees are: Patty Pohlman, Wally Giffen, Joyce Canfield, Matt Lazar, Randy Hoffman, Melody Leidheiser, and Phil Stichter (chair). Advisors to the trustees include Bill Johannes (treasurer), Mark Knueve (legal counsel) and our senior minister, Tim Ahrens.

Parents for Others Grateful for Donations

By Catherine Kennedy and Dawn Carlisle

Parents for Others appreciates the help of First Church with its first annual coat drive. Because of your contributions, we were able to donate bags upon bags of gently used coats to the Salvation Army, which distributed them to those who truly needed them in this cold weather.



We currently are holding a book drive on behalf of the YWCA Family Center. They will use these books to stock their shelves for families to access while they are at the YWCA, as well as a reserve supply that they can offer the families to take home.

Please donate your new and gently-used books to support the drive. Both children and adult books are welcome. The drop box is outside the main office. The drive will continue through Friday, May 8.



First Church Golf League Ready to Tee Off

The First Church Golf League will be playing again this year at the nine-hole Gahanna Golf Course on Ridenour Road.

The league will play every Thursday at 5 p.m. from April 30 to July 2. Everyone is welcome to participate, from beginners on up. This is a great way to learn the game, have some fun and improve as you play.

Anyone interested in joining in, please sign up in the office or contact Frank Cook at 933-0012 or fhc2@aol.com.

Notes From Christian Education

By Mark S. Williams, Director of Christian Education

Monday Night Lights Movie Series

April 6, 7 p.m.

Brokeback Mountain



Oscar-winning director Ang Lee's film has widely been praised as a love story. It is that, but the film could just as readily be called a hate story.



This acclaimed film follows the 20-year love story of two cowboys, detailing the struggles each has with his forbidden passion and the terrible consequences of crossing the line drawn by a fearful society.

The film is highly controversial because of its homosexual theme and its refusal to condemn such relationships.

The discussion of the movie will be led by the Rev. Barbara Cunningham, our minister for pastoral care. This will be the last in this year's Monday Night Lights series. See you in the fall!

Children Lenten Project Focuses on Hunger and Earth

Throughout Lent, the children will lead a church-wide mission project to raise money for Heifer International. This non-profit humanitarian organization is dedicated to ending world hunger and caring for the earth by providing livestock, trees, training and other resources to help struggling families around the globe.

Since 1944, Heifer has helped 9.2 million families in more than 125 countries move toward greater self-reliance through the gift of livestock and training in environmentally-sound agriculture. The impact of each initial gift is multiplied as recipients agree to pass on the gift by giving one or more of their animal's offspring, or the equivalent, to another in need.

All the children watched the Heifer video in the Children's Library during Education Hour and learned about the project on Sunday, March 1. They received banks and calendars to guide them through the days of the project. For additional banks and calendars or information, contact Jenny Provenzano or Mark S. Williams.

Rest and Relaxation in Nature's Glory

Join the First Church family as they head toward the hills – Templed Hills that is. Our spring retreat, "Reflections," is Friday evening, April 24, through Sunday morning, April 26. Please mark your calendars and plan to bring your family or just yourself.

Our weekend will include hiking, nature talks and activities, devotions, basketball, fishing, a folk dance for all ages, a campfire with s'mores, crafts, singing and worship at camp Sunday morning. All First Church children and youth are able to attend at no cost thanks to an Alma Keeler grant requested by the Parish Life Committee. Adults are \$90 each, which includes food, lodging and all program costs. All confirmands will be attending and their mentors are encouraged to attend.

Templed Hills is one of the United Church of Christ camp and retreat centers. It is an hour north of Columbus, off I-71 at Bellville. Our accommodations vary, and will be assigned according to each individual or families needs.

The camp buildings are clean and comfortable, and the food is good! There are acres and acres of woods, meadows, streams, a pond and a pine forest to hike in or just to sit in and watch the birds. Relaxation and enjoying God's creation will be the major emphasis for the weekend.

A brochure (including directions to Templed Hills) and registration forms are in the church office and on the Web site. **Deadline for registration is March 29.** We have space for 70 people – let's fill it! See Mark S. Williams for more details.

Butterflies Teach about Resurrection

The Children's Education Ministry uses the life cycle of the Painted Lady butterfly to illustrate the concept of resurrection. This year, we will be able to return to our tradition of releasing butterflies Easter Sunday after the 11 a.m. service.



The "baby butterflies" arrive as larvae about three weeks prior to Easter. They must quickly be put into individual cups with the food that sustains them through this part of their life cycle. We watch them grow and grow and grow until the worms look too big for the cups.

Within two weeks, the worm attaches itself to the lid of the cup and forms a chrysalis. They hang there for another week looking lifeless. There is no movement or visible
(Continued on Page 7)

Youth & Young Adults

Cabaret Curtain Goes up March 28

By Janette Hoffman

Looking for great entertainment, fellowship and a way to support youth and mission at First Church? Well look no further, as the youth and parents will be hosting their second annual *Cabaret Night* fundraiser in Parish Hall on March 28, 7-9 p.m.

The evening will include awesome entertainment, delicious snacks and desserts and raffle items for all. The proceeds from this event will help to support youth activities, including the 2009 youth mission trip to the Appalachian South Folklife Center in Pipestem, W.Va.



Tickets for cabaret are \$12 for adults and \$6 for children/youth. They will be sold on Sunday, March 22, during Fellowship Hour and also at the door the evening of the event. We will even reserve a table for your committee or group. Contact Janette Hoffman, janettehoffman@insight.rr.com, for a table reservation.

Your ticket will include complimentary popcorn and coffee/lemonade. Snacks and light dinner items will be available for a nominal charge. The doors will open at 6:30 p.m. so plan to come early for great seats and some yummy munchies!

Raffle tickets will also be sold \$1 per ticket or \$5 for 6 tickets during Fellowship Hour, as well as the evening of the cabaret. Winners will be drawn at the end of the entertainment. Raffle items will include gift baskets, hand designed jewelry, gift cards, etc. Winners need not be present to win.

Plan to attend and spread the word to friends and family. Invite them for a fun and entertaining evening while supporting the youth and mission of First Church!

Summer Camps Available for All

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

There are camps for kindergarten and first-graders with a grandparent. Weeklong camps are for children who have completed the second grade and older. There are camps for teens and camps with themes. There are camps for adults, and even one for families.

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

To take advantage of this scholarship you must do several things: 1) Decide which camp you want to attend; 2) Send in your \$75 deposit as soon as possible with the 2009 camp registration form (found in the back of the catalog) to the church and the attention of Mark S. Williams, and we will forward it to the Ohio Conference; 3) Complete the campership request form found in a folder in the church Office; 4) Send the remaining amount owed to the Ohio Conference at least two weeks prior to your camp; 5) Have a wonderful time!

Due to the increase in camp registration fee this year, First Church will offer additional scholarships for those families who need extra help. Any child who wants to go to camp should not be prevented from attending because of financial concerns.

There are extra camp catalogs in the office, or you can get one from Mark S. Williams. The deadline for early registration is March 31.

(Butterflies, Concluded from Page 6)

change. During this phase, the chrysalises are transferred to a net pavilion. On occasion we have been lucky enough to observe the butterflies emerging from the chrysalis.

It takes about two hours for the butterflies to pump blood to their wings and for them to dry and harden after they emerge. At this point, they can fly, and flit around the pavilion looking for something to eat. We feed them with sugar water placed on flowers inside their net pavilion. Their total life cycle is two to four weeks, depending on the temperature of their environment.

The children are fascinated with this very visible lesson in "resurrection" – something looking dead and hopeless – transforming into beautiful new life.

Graduation is Almost Here



First Church celebrates our graduates. Whether from high school, college or other places of learning, **please send us your information by May 11**, and we will

- publish it in the *First Church News*. Include the graduate's name, parents, school or program, accomplishments and future plans.
- Photos will be accepted only electronically by emailing dmahoney@first-church.org.

News & Missions

(Annual Report, Concluded from Page 3)

receptions are the ways in which the Committee extends First Church's hospitality to our concert attendees. Advising the Interim Minister of Music and program staffer Marty Worth on appropriate uses of Music Department funds is another function of this committee. In addition to Stewart, those who served in 2008 were: Nell Cole, Victor John, David Magers, Carl Miller, Sharon Walquist, Marty Worth, Candy Cummings, Justin DeWolfe, Marilyn Minter, Jim Griffin and Malini Peter.

All the additional musical offerings of First Church are many and varied and very ably reported by Interim Minister of Music Marti Rideout in her annual report. Let this commission report show deep appreciation and gratitude for the stellar way in which Marti Rideout under challenging circumstances assumed responsibility for First Church's music program and caused it to flourish.

Art Committee

Responsible for all of First Church's aesthetic decisions, this committee weighs in on such things as paint colors, fabric choices, fixtures and signage, additions or alterations to existing features, art restoration and preservation of artifacts. There is an attempt at present to draft a document which states the Committee's mission and presents guidelines to follow by those who are overseeing projects around the building.

A gift honoring the memory of former Committee member Allan Wingfield is allowing several long-sought redecorating projects in the parlor to move forward. A number of existing furniture pieces will be re-glued and re-upholstered. Two sofas, two wing chairs and a round table will be ordered new. Rupert Starr is serving as advisor to the project. Allen Baker, interior designer and Committee member, is handling the details. Other committee members serving are: Peggy Alexander, Debbie Anderson, Chairman Anne Hudson, Rick Sayre, Gleva Stephens, Becky Taft, and Kendra Worley.

Remembrance Committee

After a several-year hiatus, at the behest of Trustees Chairman Philip Stichter this Committee was re-established under the chairmanship of Sarah Garbe. Serving with her are: Bev Cook, Kay Metz, Rick Sayre, Valerie Stichter and Larry Walquist.

The monies of the Remembrance Fund are invested by First Church's Trustees, but disbursements are made at the discretion of the committee. Traditionally, the Remembrance Fund has been a source for non-budgeted items of an aesthetic or commemorative nature or meant to enhance the worship experience at First Church.

The Archives

Archivist James Griffin's lofty intentions have been severely hampered by a shortage of funds. His hope of consulting with a professional preservationist has had to be set aside for lack of consulting fees. The small budget barely allows for the annual binding of all the newsletters and Orders of Worship which become part of First Church's permanent record. The Archives have once again been moved to the small room adjacent to the Parish Hall

mezzanine. Most of Washington Gladden's fifty-two books are there, plus member records from the church's founding, and countless assortments of documents, programs, pictures, and annual reports. The vast majority of First Church's memorabilia was deposited with the Ohio Historical Society years ago.

First Church Arts Festival Committee

With the June 6-8, 2008, Columbus Arts Festival's relocation into the Discovery District, First Church took advantage of its own proximity by offering a wide range of opportunities for Festival visitors. A Liturgical Art Guild Traveling Collection exhibit was mounted in the Parish Hall. (A nailfree mounting system underwritten by Art Committee member Becky Taft allowed numerous pieces to be displayed with no damage to paint or walls.) Also in the Parish Hall a "Chair-A-Tea" featured boutique-themed bentwood chairs for sale plus a lovely Tea Room hosted by the Missions Commission. Varieties of iced teas and light refreshments were served. Proceeds benefited Doctors Without Borders.

Four half-hour organ concerts were performed at various times by Julia Richardson Parker, G. Dene Barnard (2), and James D. Hildreth. Arts and History Docent Tours were available after each concert. A Choral Festival on Friday at 7 p.m. included the Columbus Children's Choir, Capriccio, Dublin Singers, Columbus Women's Chorus, and the First Church Choir. The finale was a Congolese mass—Missa Luba. Sheena Phillips was director. The Ohio Capital Winds under the direction of First Church member, Catherine Hope-Cunningham, performed on Saturday evening at 7 p.m. The final concert of the weekend on Sunday at 2 p.m. was by The Magpie Consort under the direction of Sheena Phillips.

Picture post cards, docent brochures, and an elevated wheel with flying streamers to call attention to our Ninth Street door were additional features.

First Church welcomed over 1,100 visitors and musical guests during the 2008 Columbus Arts Festival. Our events raised over \$1,580 for Doctors Without Borders and over \$1,400 to defray our costs.

Those who planned First Church's involvement in the Arts Festival were: Deborah Anderson, Bev Cook, Anne Hudson, Sarah Lange, Rick Sayre, Chairman Jan Wade, Mark Williams, Marti Rideout and Tom Stewart, Ex Officio.



(Rev. Ahrens, Concluded from Page 2)

the directory.” In other words, each person who is a member of First Church – either active or inactive – is held my prayers. You are in my heart.

Paraphrasing the Psalmist, I ask, “How do we sing the Lord’s song in a time such as this?” Let me offer three simple steps:

First, pray through the Psalms. Beginning at Psalm 1, read aloud all 150 Psalms. Take the next 150 days, starting today, and pray through the Psalms. The Psalms are the cries of the people to God. The Psalms are the people of God in prayer. They are laments, confessions, praises, weeping and joyful exaltations. The Psalms reflect our human experience.

At the end of each reading, lift to God in prayer the condition of your heart. Where are you that morning or evening? Share this with God either silently or aloud. End each time of prayer by slowly speaking aloud the Lord’s Prayer. When your 150 days have ended, begin again. In the August newsletter, I will also recommend the next sequence of scriptural readings for prayer!

Second, take time to write in a daily journal how it is with your soul. How are you coping with the stresses and strains of your life? How are you handling these economically depressing times? It is easy to become cynical and negative as you pass through these times. I encourage also to reflect on the “good news” of your life. Where is God touching your life right now? God touches us through the rising of the crocuses, the phone calls of friends and the kindness of a stranger. God smiles at us through the love in a child’s eyes and the song of the robin in early spring. Listen, pay attention and open yourself to God’s presence in your life. Record these experiences. You will be blown away by how many times each day, good things are happening in your walk with Christ.

Third, phone a friend! Part of the struggle we face in our daily lives is the feeling of aloneness and emptiness. If you want to be a millionaire, you have “phone a friend.” Pick up the phone and call someone. Call and talk with one other person. If you can’t think of anyone to call, call me 228-1741, ext. 13, or call Rev. Cunningham, 228-1741, ext. 21. We are here to listen and be present to you. Find another person with whom to share your insights from prayer and journaling.

Praying the Psalms, journaling and phoning a friend are steps to finding praise in your heart and soul.

Member Happy April Birthdays

4/1:	Dennis Ginty	4/14:	Caden Thomas
4/2:	Pete Boriin	4/14:	Sarah Zickafoose
4/2:	Bill Lange	4/15:	Bruce Aldrich
4/3:	Mary Jo Mowery	4/15:	Tammy Anderson
4/3:	Clark Zickafoose	4/15:	Lovette Gover
4/4:	Megan McCabe	4/15:	David Holt
4/4:	Tom O’Reilly	4/16:	Virginia O’Neill
4/4:	Al Waddell	4/16:	Julie Trace
4/5:	Katrina Hadley	4/16:	Nina Zimmerman
4/6:	Amy Hudepohl	4/17:	Bryan Brown
4/6:	Eric Messick	4/19:	Madalyn Dean
4/7:	Emma Leidheiser	4/20:	Alex Rodriguez
4/7:	Dana Schultz	4/20:	Chandler Wilson
4/7:	Stefanie Weaver	4/21:	Gretchen Fleurant
4/8:	Nancy Loy	4/21:	Kim Kutschbach
4/8:	Amy Mailer	4/22:	Rayne McCann
4/8:	Amanda Mason	4/22:	Roger Sankey
4/8:	Anna Rambo	4/22:	Emma & Thomas
4/9:	Kelley Gilbert		Welsh-Huggins
4/9:	Becky Taft	4/24:	Kathryn Bamberger
4/10:	Jane Werum	4/24:	Wally Giffen
4/11:	Chris Eikens	4/24:	Anderson Hadley
4/11:	Jan Kevan	4/25:	Lori Cooke
4/11:	David Knox	4/25:	Samantha Myers
4/11:	Merry Roach	4/26:	Ben Horne
4/12:	Diane Dixon	4/26:	Abigail Middendorf
4/12:	Ben Faith	4/26:	Abigail Middendorf
4/12:	Roberta Lucas	4/27:	Chris Farquhar
4/12:	Rick Pfeiffer	4/28:	Neal Brower
4/13:	Jennifer Casaletta	4/28:	Frank Cook
4/13:	Sarah Frank	4/29:	John Martin
4/14:	Wanda Beemer	4/30:	Susan Sitler
4/14:	Allison Fulford		
4/14:	Sarah Gray		

Member Happy Anniversaries

4/4:	Abby Leichman and Brian Cave
4/4:	Amy and David Mailer
4/7:	Meredith and Mark Knueve
4/9:	Ellie and Matt Zeiger
4/17:	Martha and Dave Loy
4/18:	Sharon and Gary Leidheiser
4/18:	Joyce and Craig Oyler
4/24:	Leslie and Jason McCann

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

Mission Offerings Schedule

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

- April 5 - Outdoor Ministries
- April 12 - Good Samaritan Program
- April 19 - Earth Share Ohio
- April 26 - BREAD

Church Calendar

Sunday, March 22

9 am - Early Worship - PH
9 am - Treble Choir - Choir Rm
10 am - First Church Choir - Choir Rm
10 am - Education Hour
11 am - Worship Service - San
12 pm - Fellowship Hour - PH
12:15 pm - Safe Church Committee - PFR
12:30 pm - Confirmation field trip, Islamic Center
4 pm - Music Search Committee - LC
6 pm - Cabaret rehearsal - PH

Tuesday, March 24

11 am - Tuesdays at First Book Study - LC
12:15 pm - Tuesdays at First Concert - San
12:45 pm - Tuesdays at First Lunch - PH
7 pm - Council - LC

Wednesday, March 25

12 pm - Arts Festival Committee - PFR

Thursday, March 26

6 pm: First Church Ringers - Bell Rm
7:30 pm: First Church Choir - Choir Rm

Friday, March 27

6 pm - Faith Mission Meals

Saturday, March 28

9 am - Choral Society Rehearsal - San
7 pm - Youth Cabaret - PH

Sunday, March 29

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
4 pm - Congregational Concert - San
5:15 pm - Concert Reception

Wednesday, April 1

11 am: Book Study - PR
12 pm - Arts Festival Committee - PFR

Thursday, April 2

6 pm: First Church Ringers - Bell Rm
7:30 pm - First Church Choir - Choir Room

Saturday, April 4

6:30 pm - Young Adult Dinner Group - Black Creek Bistro

Sunday, April 5 (Palm Sunday)

9 am - Early Worship Service - PH
9 am - Treble Choir - Choir Rm
10 am - Education Hour
10 am - Parish Life - PFR
11 am - Worship Service - San
12 pm - Fellowship Hour - PH
7:30 pm - "The King of Kings" movie - San

Monday, April 6

5:30 pm - Sacred Earth Committee - PR
6 pm - Stephen Ministers, Adult Library
7 pm - Art of Positive Parenting - Rm C
7 pm - Monday Night Lights - PH & LC

Tuesday, April 7

6:30 pm - Children's Ed - Rm C
7 pm - Church Growth - PR

Wednesday, April 8

12 pm - Arts Festival Committee - PFR
3-10 pm - Cum Christo Seder Dinner - PH

Thursday, April 9 (Maundy Thursday)

10 am - Eastside Fellowship - PR
6 pm - Maundy Thursday Dinner - PH
7:30 pm - Tenebrae Service - San
8:30 pm - First Church Choir - Choir Rm

Friday, April 10 (Good Friday, office closes at 2 pm)

12 pm - Good Friday service - San
3:45 pm - Parents for Others - Toddler Room

Saturday, April 11

10 am - Quilters at First Church - LC

Sunday, April 12 (Easter)

7 am - Sunrise Service - Art Museum steps
9 am - Worship Service - San
10 am - First Church Choir - Choir Rm
10 am - Easter Brunch - PH
11 am - Worship Service - San

Tuesday, April 14

6 pm - Music Committee - PR
6:30 pm - Technology Committee - LC
7 pm - Mission Committee - PR

Wednesday, April 15

9 am - Newsletter folding - LC
11 am - Book Study - PR
12 pm - Arts Festival Committee - PFR

Thursday, April 16

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

Saturday, April 18

10 am - House and Grounds - LC

Sunday, April 19

8 am - Recycling Day - Rm C
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
9 pm - Compline - San

Fellowship Hour Beverage Sales:

Coffee and tea sales will be available on April 5 and 19 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.



Enjoy Some Fellowship

Eastside Fellowship will meet at 10 a.m. on Maundy Thursday, April 9, at the church. Join us, and get to know your fellow First Churchers.

Don't Forget the Blood Drive

The Red Cross Blood Mobile will be at First Church on Sunday, April 26, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

You can schedule an appointment time by signing up in the church office, or calling the office at 228-1741.

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. 21, 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.



April Fellowship Hour

April 5: Jeremiah - Victor John
 April 12: Kings - Stephanie Koscher
 April 19: Leviticus - Martha Loy
 April 26: Michah - Amy Mailer

April Acolyte Schedule

April 5: Carly Kutschbach & Meri Roach
 April 12: (9 a.m.) Cameron Wade & E. Welsh-Huggins
 (11 a.m.) Sarah Ahrens & Katie Geis
 April 19: Alex Heer & Camille Kesler
 April 26: Jacob Kesler & Reel Chaudhri
 (Schedules also online at www.first-church.org)

Next Newsletter Deadline

Articles Due: Monday, April 6 by noon
 Email: dmahoney@first-church.org
 Folding Team: Wed., April 15, 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*
 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*
 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

Melody Leidheiser.....*Moderator*
 Sarah Reed.....*Vice-Moderator*
 Carol Gallagher.....*Secretary*
 David Holt.....*Treasurer*
 Phil Stichter.....*Trustee Chair*
 Frank Cook.....*Administration Commissioner*
 Pavan Peter.....*Church Growth Commissioner*
 Diana Kutschbach.....*Education Commissioner*
 Bill Rhoads.....*House & Grounds Commissioner*
 Anne Hudson, Fran Panek.....*Mission Commissioners*
 Julia Myers, Amy Fulton.....*Parish Life Commissioners*
 Charlie Weaver.....*Deacon*
 Jerome Dailey.....*Deacon*
 Kim Kutschbach.....*Member-at-large*

~ REMEMBER YOUR LOVED ONES ~
 WITH A DEDICATION OF FLOWERS
 Contact Marty Worth at 614.228.1741, ext. 12,
mworth@first-church.org

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

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DATED MATERIAL - VERY IMPORTANT

*Please Deliver: **Monday, March 23, 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