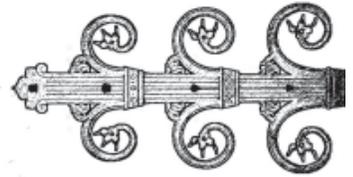


First Church News



First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ • Columbus, Ohio

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Places Along the Way

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister



"But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall one come forth."
— Micah 4:3-5, 5:1-5

In the 1985 film, *The Trip to Bountiful*, Geraldine Page plays the part of a woman making her final journey home. She is living in Los Angeles with her children and decides, before she dies, she needs to return to Bountiful, Texas, to see her homestead one more time. Without telling anyone, she sets off, hitching rides, going by Greyhound and walking when necessary. The plot is simple enough. But as the *trip* to Bountiful unfolds, it is clear that the journey is the destination. The strangers who help her and the places she sees along the way shape the heart of her journey.

As we enter the Advent and Christmas seasons, our journey to Bethlehem becomes our destination. Isn't this always the case? We often think the "destination" feature on Mapquest is the most important part of requested information. But in reality, it is all the stop signs, left and right turns and passages through small towns and villages that make the trip worthwhile.

On November 30, the first Sunday of Advent marks the beginning our renewed journey of faith toward Christ. It is a journey that weaves in and out of passages of faith and doubt, darkness and light. During December, I encourage each of you to take time to discover anew, the place in your heart where God is. God can be discovered in the "ah-ha moments," in the awkward silence with a stranger refreshed only by a smile; in the stillness of dawn or the quiet of sunset. God can be rekindled in a random act of kindness and a gesture of selfless giving.

The sermons for Advent and Christmas will reflect on places on the journey of faith. I invite you to worship Sundays at 9 or 11 a.m. On Christmas Eve at 7:30 and 11 p.m., we will end the journey to Bethlehem in worship. On Christmas Day, thousands will gather again for Bethlehem on Broad Street, where we will meet face-to-face, the hungry and lonely, the forgotten and forsaken.

Long ago, Bethlehem was seen as the most insignificant of towns, according to prophetic scripture. In time, it became known as the birthplace of our savior. Pay attention to seemingly insignificant places, people and moments of your life. There, something may stir that will change your world forever.

Time to Celebrate Our 2009 Stewardship Campaign

By the Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens

On November 23, we will celebrate our Stewardship Drive for 2009. There is much to celebrate in **"Honoring our Legacy and Empowering our Future."**

First, let's celebrate the work of our committee: Wayne Piper, chairperson; Cindy Deliman, vice-chairperson; Joyce Ward, publications; Joe Daniels, publicity; Marilyn Minter, team leaders; and Al Waddell, presenters. Each gave many hours and great effort to make our campaign successful. Second, we need to celebrate all of you who stepped up and made contributions that will lead us to a great 2009.

Third, we need to celebrate – in anticipation – the letters of intent that are still coming in! We know everyone will step up with joy to contribute to our success in 2009. So, we await the final numbers! (Continued on Page 5)

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After the Falling Apart - Healing

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



The election is over, the healing begins. We are going to work together to bring our country back. It is now time to awaken in ourselves the life we know to make the America that is caring and concerned.

Pema Chodron, in her book *When Things Fall Apart, Heart Advice for Difficult Times*, writes about awakening. I am particularly

drawn to her ideas when I try to avoid something I don't want to face – things like illness, moving to a new place, my body growing older, losing someone I love.

Chodron writes: "There is a teaching on three kinds of awakening: awakening from the dream of ordinary sleep, awakening at death from the dream of life, and awakening into full enlightenment from the dream of delusion. These teachings say that when we die, we experience it as waking up from a very long dream." So if this is a dream, I might as well spend it trying to look at what scares me instead of running away. Not easy to do, but facing it is the only way to learn, grow and go on.

She goes on to say, "We experience (our personal demons) as shame, as jealousy, as abandonment, as rage. They are anything that makes us so uncomfortable that we continually run away. We do the big escape: we act out, say something, slam a door, hit someone, or throw a pot as a way of not facing what's happening in our hearts. Or we shove the feelings under and somehow deaden the pain. We become so accustomed to speeding ahead that we rob ourselves of joy."

I think of not only what happens to me personally, but what is happening when a bad deed is punished with revenge. Revenge gets revenge gets revenge, and it seems there is no end in sight. There are many examples that I could write about, but I'd like to think we are at the bottom of the hole of despair and ruin, and the only way is up. How we go from here is up to us together. We must look at what we believe to be sacred and our examples of God's love, and live with it, let it be poured out of our hearts. In the long run, we will feel so much better when we live in love and forgiveness, hope and promise rather than hate and revenge.

I know I'm preaching, but to each one of you, no matter your age or status in life, reaching out to each other in peace and love, reaching out to the world in healing and peace, will bring us to the top, like cream rising on fresh milk. You in First Church are the cream of the crop! Let's change the world with our love, first of each other, then reaching out. Revenge and resentment only hurt your inner being. Change the love in your heart as we change the love in this country and spread peace to the world. It's a big task, but we can do it!!!!!!!

Creating an Intergenerational Church

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

While teens spend about 50% of their time with peers, studies show that they only spend 7% of their waking hours interacting directly with those older than themselves – adults.



Margaret Mead, a renowned anthropologist, warned of the dangers of such a culture, which she called a *co-figurative culture*, in which all learning is horizontal, and little or no learning comes from older or more experienced generations (*Starting Right: Thinking Theologically About Youth Ministry*).

Such ghettoization of our youth unfortunately too easily and too often becomes a chronic problem in much of our church life. Throughout church activities, so much of the time youth tend to hang out only with other youth and adults tend to associate only with other adults. What results is a system in which many active church teens all too often slowly grow away from the church once they become adults, because they have not effectively learned from those around them how to mature into Christian adulthood.

While First Church does have an amazing and ever-growing team of Sunday school teachers and confirmation mentors, who work and interact with the young people of First Church on a regular basis, we are not immune to this societal tendency of generational grouping, nor are we always effectively preventing our young people from drifting away from the church as they grow older.

In order to continue growing into the intergenerational church God is calling us to be, the youth ministry of First Church has envisioned "youth ministry partners" to work and grow with the middle school and high school youth groups of First Church. *Ministry partners* are present at youth group activities, not just as observers or chaperones, but rather, as people of faith who want to develop relationships and grow spiritually with others in the church.

Ministry partners build supportive and nurturing relationships across generations by partnering together for the sake of the spiritual formation of the entire church. Ministry partners share their own gifts, passions and experiences, in order to make a significant difference in the lives of the young people in our midst. Ministry partners participate with youth in hands-on mission, fellowship, educational activities and spiritual growth.

God is constantly calling each of us to live out our faith in new ways! Do you feel called to bring about growth in the church as a youth ministry partner at First Church? If so, please talk with me.

First Church News

Ways to Help Save \$\$\$\$\$

By Sharon Leidheiser, Business Administrator

Would you like the church to save more money and reduce budget costs? Here's a list of ways you can help:

* **Bring your newspapers and recycle.** We can make more money if more people bring their newspapers and put them in our recycle bin. Some months we make as much as \$20 but other months we make only \$10. Coming to church? Bring your newspapers along!

* **Volunteer in the office.** Can you help in the office as a volunteer? We don't want to hire another part-time person to work in the office. Instead we hope we can get volunteers to do the work and save up to \$8,000 a year. We need people to work Tuesday, Thursday or Friday. You can work 9-12 or 12-3, and have fun at the same time. Contact the office if you are interested.



* **Get the newsletter online.** Do you have the newsletter mailed to you? If you want to save us printing, mailing and other costs, why not read the newsletter online at

our Web site (www.first-church.org). Please call the office to take your name off the newsletter mailing list.

* **Reimbursement checks.** When you purchase items for the church and are entitled to a refund, instead of having your check mailed have it put in your church mailbox.

* **Pledge envelopes aren't necessary for check payment.** If you pay your pledge or other donations by check, you don't need to put the check into an envelope. Just mark on the memo line what the check is for: i.e. pledge, mission, concert fund, flowers, etc.

In these tough economic times, we all have to do what we can to help us stay within our budget. It is part of being a good steward here at First Church.

New Endowment Fund Established

By Bill Johannes, Trustees Treasurer

The Board of Trustees is pleased to announce the establishment of the Starr-Wingfield Furnishings Endowment Fund by Rupert D. "Twink" Starr. It is funded through memorial gifts in honor of Allan Wingfield, who died earlier this year, and by a planned estate gift from Twink.

Up to 5% of the fund's value may be used annually for the purchase of new furnishings, as well as redecorating rooms within the building. Over the years, Allan and Twink have generously donated funds to redecorate the church parlor, the church office, the large conference room and the senior minister's study.

Allan was a church member for 38 years and served on the Art Committee and in the Pretiola Shop. Twink has been a member for 49 years and has served in numerous leadership positions, including moderator of council and chairman of the trustees. We are grateful for their foresight to help ensure the beauty and functionality of our church rooms for many years to come.

It's Cookie Mission Time

First Church's Annual Cookie Mission is calling for volunteers and cookies.

On Sunday, Dec. 14, from 8 to 11 a.m., First Church volunteers will assemble the tins in the Education Wing, Rm. C and then deliver cookies and candies to those less fortunate.



This holiday event of giving to area shut-ins and missions has become an important mission for First Church. Please consider volunteering your time and/or your baking talents for this special gift-giving mission.

Opportunities to help include:

- ♦ Donating cookie tins. Please bring them to the church office by December 7.
- ♦ Donating 4-dozen Christmas cookies or candies. Please bring to church the day of the event.
- ♦ Helping fill tins with goodies on December 14.
- ♦ Delivering to area shut-ins on December 14.

To volunteer, or for more details, call Sharon Leidheiser in the church office at 228-1741, ext. 11.

Board of Trustees, Part 6

By Phil Stichter, Trustees Chairperson

Past articles have described some of the church's more recently-established and long-standing endowment funds. This article focuses on restricted gifts that donors have made that are not endowment funds, but are managed by the trustees.

The reason they are not endowment funds is because the donor has not stipulated
(Continued on Page 5)

Music Notes

By Marti Rideout, Interim Minister of Music



Congregational Concert

Sunday, December 14, 4 p.m.

G. Dene Barnard, organ

The next in our series of **Congregational Concerts** will feature **G. Dene Barnard**, Organist Choirmaster Emeritus, playing an organ recital featuring only one work: *La Nativité du Seigneur* (The Nativity of Our Lord) by Olivier Messiaen. This concert celebrates the 100th anniversary of the birth of Olivier Messiaen (December 10, 1908-April 27, 1992), a French composer, organist and ornithologist.

The nine movements of *La Nativité du Seigneur* will be narrated by Lissa Wade, our resident French expert! People who attend this concert should know that this music does not contain familiar Christmas carols. "It is quite contemporary in its ideas, moods and sounds. It contains much dissonance, some of it loud. A listener must be willing to freely go where the composer may lead you to gain an understanding of this music. It is, at times, quiet and lush, and romantic sounding. At other times it is bold and not unlike a glorious fireworks display," Dene said. This is a rare opportunity to hear one of Columbus' finest organists and much beloved member of First Church do what he does best. Plan to attend.

A Festival of Lessons and Carols

December 21, 4 p.m.

Our **First Church Choir**, **Gallery Handbell Ringers**, **Treble Choir**, organist **G. Dene Barnard**, organist and director **Marti Rideout**, guest conductor **James Gallagher** and **brass quartet and timpani** will combine talents and to usher in Christmas with the **Festival of Lessons and Carols**.

The service of Lessons and Carols was conceived by E.W. Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury, for Christmas Eve 1880 in Truro Cathedral in England. In 1919, Eric Milner-White, at age 34 the new Dean of King's College and a former army chaplain, was convinced the Church of England needed more imaginative worship and created an order that included a bidding prayer, the Lord's Prayer, lessons that tell the story of our salvation from creation through the birth of Jesus, and appropriate anthems and hymns to follow the lessons. This beautiful service was first broadcast in 1928 and has since become the standard format for Christmas Lessons and Carols throughout the world.

Seasonal anthems, instrumental offerings, lessons and familiar Christmas carols sung by the congregation will be heard. This will be a blessing beyond measure.

Advent: A Time of Anticipation, Possibilities

Throughout Advent we will sing hymns and hear lessons that tell of the prophecies of Isaiah and John the Baptist and the announcement of the Angel Gabriel to Mary, speaking of the one who is to come. And so we

wait, not always easily or patiently. Our secular world assails us with Christmas decorations in October, seasonal music broadcast in shopping centers and parking lots, guilt to buy more to prove our love to family and friends, pressure to decorate our homes both inside and out more splendidly than in the past, Christmas parties to plan and attend, gifts to wrap, cards to mail, stress and anxiety beyond the realm. Religious leaders and our inner voices tell us to take time for reflection, to be quiet in this time of waiting. Right.

Yet we are an Advent people, waiting to celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day, waiting for the Messiah to come again on this earth. This is mystery to be revealed, or to remain.

Mary's waiting was more physically palpable as her waist thickened, her belly protruded, and she experienced awkwardness, fatigue and discomfort. When the baby leaped in her womb and signaled newness of life, did she wonder what her child would look like, what he would do in life, how God's plan would be made known, whether she would be a good mother, or whether she would suffer in childbirth? Mystery accompanied her reality.

When I was pregnant with my firstborn, Lissa Wade, my husband gave me a wood carving of a pregnant woman which, to me, has always been an image of Mary. This carving is a reminder that we are all pregnant with possibility. Just as Mary was pregnant with the Son of God, First Church is in a time of spiritual gestation, pregnant with the possibility of joyful singing throughout Advent, Christmas and beyond.

During this time of waiting and expectation, may our Advent hymns and anthems bring you peace and hope in the midst of holy chaos and mystery. May the glorious instruments and voices raised in anthems and your hearty singing of Christmas carols bring you joy and the promise of everlasting possibility.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

First Church Holiday Schedule

*Hanging of the Greens - November 30,
12:30 p.m.*

*Congregational Concert, G. Dene Barnard
- Dec. 14, 4 p.m.*

*Children's Christmas Play and Dinner -
Dec. 14, 6 p.m.*

Festival of Lessons and Carols - Dec. 21, 4 p.m.

Christmas Eve, Wednesday, Dec. 24

7:30 p.m. - The Drama of the Nativity

10:30 p.m. - Organ Recital

11 p.m. - Candlelight Communion Service



(Trustees, Continued from Page 3)

that the gift's principal remain in perpetuity and not be spent; on the other hand, the donor has stipulated a specific use of the gift.

The challenge is in managing these funds to make wise decisions as to when and how much of the gift should be spent at one time. Below are descriptions of restricted gifts the church has received. The information comes in part from the past work of Sheldon Taft and Tom Worley.

Arthur C. Wright Good Samaritan Fund: This gift came from the estate of Arthur C. Wright, who died in 1980 in LaGrange, Ill. There is no record of Mr. Wright ever having been a member of our church. However, two other churches also received funds to establish a Good Samaritan Fund. Our church's Good Samaritan Fund was established in the 1860s as the Deacon's Fund, a designation used in many of our UCC churches for money used to help the poor. In 1953, the Deacon's Fund was renamed the Good Samaritan Fund.

Alma Keeler Youth Education Fund: Alma Keeler, who died in 1976, left a portion of her estate to the church for specified uses and purposes. They include the maintenance and expansion of our children's library and support of the education programs for the children and youth of our church.

Lucetta C. Gearhart Remembrance Fund: In 1990, Lucetta Gearhart bequeathed funds for the church's remembrance fund. That fund had been created several years before by council for the purpose of receiving monetary gifts or memorials for projects not included in the church's regular operating budget. Guidelines for the use of this fund have been adopted by the council.

Martin/MacNevin Organ Fund: The 1990 bequest of Jean MacNevin provided a significant gift "to be held in trust, in memory of William Marshall MacNevin, for the purposes of maintaining the Kimball Memorial Organ as it is presently situated in the Church." The object of this bequest is to preserve the organ for use in any services being held in the sanctuary.

The purpose of these articles is to stimulate interest in making special gifts that benefit the future of our church and honor our past. More next month.

(Stewardship, Continued from Page 1)

On November 9 in worship, Wayne Piper shared the poem *Faith*:

*When you come to the edge
Of all the light you know,
And you are about to step
Off into the darkness,
Faith is believing
One of two things will happen:
There will be something solid
To stand on
Or you will learn to fly.*

I believe that our best days at First Congregational Church, UCC, are ahead of us! In faith, let us believe that we will land on our feet or learn to fly.

And as 2008 ends, I want to thank you for your faithful stewardship this year. We are close to our 2008 goals for income, and if you continue to send your pledges and unpledged gifts, we have a chance to finish on budget. Please send your support in care of Sharon Leidheiser, our business manager, by December 31. If you have questions about what you have yet to send in, call Sharon at 228-1741, ext 11, or email her at sleidheiser@first-church.org.

Rev. Ahrens' Sermon Titles for Advent/Christmas

Nov. 30 - Advent I - "The Mountaintop," Isaiah 64:1-9, Mark 13:24-37

Dec. 7 - Advent II - "The Desert," Isaiah 40: 1-11; Mark 1:1-8

Dec. 14 - Advent III - "Bethany," Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11; John 1:6-8, 19-28

Dec. 21 - Advent IV - "Nazareth," II Samuel 7:1-11,16; Luke 1: 26-38

Dec. 24 (7:30 and 11 p.m. services) - "Bethlehem: An Unstable Birthing Place"

Notes From Christian Education

By Mark S. Williams, Director of Christian Education

Advent resources for children, families and adults will be available beginning Sunday, Nov. 23, at the entrance to the worship space and in classrooms. An Advent children's activities calendar will be available and is perfect to display on a refrigerator or a family bulletin board. "Wake Up to Joy" is a booklet of family prayers, scriptures and reflections for each day of Advent. "Living in Hope" by Henri Nouwen is an individual devotion booklet for the days of Advent. Please pick up a copy at either service or in the church office.



Each Sunday of Advent, several activities sheets will be available for the children that relate to our children's time in worship. The activities sheets also will be available for the 9 a.m. service. On Sunday, Dec. 21, there will be several activities available at the door for the younger children during the Service of Lessons and Carols since they remain in the sanctuary for the entire time.

The children's Christmas play will be presented to the church at the congregational Christmas dinner on Sunday, Dec. 14, from 6-7:30 p.m. Please watch for details on how to sign up for the dinner. The children are very excited and will be rehearsing very hard in the coming weeks!

Advent's Spiritual Journey Begins Nov. 30

Can it possibly be Advent already? Didn't we just finish packing away the Christmas decorations in preparation for a new year? As it does every year, Advent comes upon us much too quickly, and we get caught up in the whirlwind of activities and preparations that lead to Christmas. It will be January before we know what hit us. We will have rushed through another Advent, hardly stopping to take a breath and wonder at the good news of Emmanuel, "God with us."

This five-part Adult Education series begins Nov. 30, the first Sunday of Advent. It is designed for those who want to slow down and immerse themselves in the Advent season. It is inspirational and devotional in nature, an experiential Advent-ure through the Advent season. We will walk with Mary and Joseph on the road to Bethlehem, taking time to "ponder these things in our heart." During the sessions we will utilize music, art, poetry and a variety of interactive activities centered on biblical passages that connect to Advent. Be sure to pick up the education brochure for the winter quarter for a full schedule.

Limited Edition Ornament

First Church is continuing our exciting program in celebrating the history of our church through an ongoing Christmas Ornament project. Each year, one of our

beautiful stained glass windows is featured as an ornament. This series started last year and will continue the next 19 years. The first ornament was the "Shepherd Window" that is located in the Gladden Chapel. This ornament is still available in limited quantity.

Presale of this year's ornament has begun and they may be purchased at the conclusion of the 9 a.m. service and during the Fellowship Hour after 11 a.m. worship in the Parish Hall. The 2008 ornament is "The Light of the World," located in the sanctuary in the Parable Windows. Both ornaments are \$15 each and payment must accompany the placing of the order. A sample will be on display.

Children's Christmas Play Set for Dec. 14

By Andrew Welsh-Huggins

Recession? Crashing markets? Global economic meltdown? Whatever. It's time for the Christmas play – things must be looking up.

We're heading west this year, way out west, to a little frontier town with a funny name, "Bethle," that needs some cleaning up. See, the town sheriff doesn't believe in Christmas. Nothing but *tomfoolery*. He's so cantankerous he's cancelling the Christmas play. Holly the schoolteacher, Kitty the saloon owner, Doc and the mayor try to talk some sense into him but he ain't budging. Will someone show the sheriff the light, or maybe even a certain star, and save the day, not to mention the play?

Find out Sunday, Dec. 14, at 6 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Enjoy a kid-friendly meal – hope you like rattlesnake soup! – then settle down for the theatrical adventure. The rattlesnake soup is a joke folks. We will be servin' our famous chicken strips, tater-tots, macaroni and cheese, slaw and some awesome carrot sticks. We'll start as always with a performance by the Mistletoe Marchers (cowboys and cowgirls, ages pre-K through second grade) followed by the main event.

Rehearsals run during Education Hour through Dec. 7. Dress rehearsal is Saturday, Dec. 13, in Parish Hall from 1 to 3 p.m. Questions? Fire up your stage coach server and send a pony express e-mail to Andrew Welsh-Huggins at awhcolumbus@hotmail.com, or just give a shout at 614-274-4803. See ya soon, pardners.

New Members Class, Dec. 13: The next new members class will be held Saturday, December 13, 9 a.m.-noon, in the First Church choir room. The class will join as members on Sun., Dec. 21. Those interested in joining the class, can register by filling out the sign-up slip in the bulletin or in the church office, or call Mark S. Williams at 614.228.1741, ext. 15. This class is also offered to anyone interested in learning more about First Church and the United Church of Christ.

Youth & Young Adults

YAYA Ministry

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

Youth Announcements

20 Hour Famine/Lock-in: For high school youth. Noon, Saturday, Nov. 29, until 9 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 30 This lock-in will be a time of fun and fellowship filled with movies and fun games, like Sardines, Ghost in the Graveyard, Guitar Hero, Apples to Apples, and more! It will also be a time of fasting – no eating (ending in a HUGE breakfast on Sunday morning!). We will spend some of our time together talking about world hunger, including Bible studies, educational games, worship, and more.



Middle School Faith and Art Discussion: Sunday, Nov. 30, 12:30-2:30 p.m. (*Time changed from previous communication*) At this session, we will discuss how faith has been expressed through many different forms of art (sculptures, paintings, etc.) throughout history and we look at how this artwork has defined the Church over the years. We also will explore how we can express our faith today through the use of art.

Wexner Family Film Festival: Sunday, Dec. 7 Middle school and high school youth groups will watch *Taina 2: A New Amazon Adventure* at the Wexner Center for the Arts. This Brazilian movie recounts the tale of the girl warrior Tainá as she wanders the Amazon rainforest in harmony with its lush trees, brightly plumaged birds and exotic animals. Meet at First Church at 3 p.m. to carpool. After the movie, we will return to First Church for pizza and a discussion of the movie.

Youth Volunteers at Bethlehem on Broad Street: Middle school and high school youth will volunteer as a team at Bethlehem on Broad Street on Monday, Dec. 22, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. We will wrap and fill toiletry bags. Bring scissors, tape and wrapping paper, as well as items to wrap or fill the bags, including toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, lotion, deodorant, sandwich sized zip lock bags, womens/men's packaged underwear and socks, childrens' socks, gloves, and \$10 gift cards from Kroger or Walmart. For more information, contact Rev. Lori (ltisher@first-church.org) or Janette Hoffman.

Want to help with Youth Sunday (Feb. 8, 2009)? Plans for music, prayers and liturgy, preaching, and liturgical ambiance are underway. Get involved today! Contact Rev. Lori at ltisher@first-church.org or 228-1741, ext. 21.

Youth Mission Trip 2009: The high school youth group will be going to the Appalachian South Folklife Center in Pipestem, W. Va., June 14 -20, 2009. We will learn about Appalachian life and issues affecting rural areas suffering from poverty, while performing much needed repairs and maintenance on local resident's homes. **\$50 initial deposit from all participants is due by December 15.** Questions? Contact Rev. Lori.

Spring Cabaret: The middle school and high school will be organizing a cabaret in Spring 2009 as a fundraiser. Teams of youth and adults are forming now for advertising, program development, ticket sales, the raffle drawing, food, coordinating volunteers, backstage crew, and set-up and design. We need your help! If you want to be involved, contact Rev. Lori.

Rev. Lori's session plan from the recent youth group discussion on Faith and Politics was included in the Rethinking Youth Ministry blog, a major communication tool in professional youth ministry circles. Check it out: <http://rethinkingyouth.blogspot.com/2008/10/youth-vote-ii-faith-politics.html/> Congrats Rev. Lori. What an honor!

Young Adult Announcements

Young Adult Dinner Group: Saturday, Dec. 6, at 6:30 p.m. at Mad Mex Restaurant, 1542 North High St. RSVP to Rev. Lori by Dec. 4.

College Care Packages: If you or your son or daughter is in college and would appreciate a Finals Week Care Package, please send college addresses to Rev. Lori. If you would like to help prepare these packages, please contact Rev. Lori. Packages will be assembled and sent in mid-December.

Parents for Others Donations: First Church's Parents for Others small group ministry is currently working on "Operation Shower: Shower in a Box," a project to collect new blankets, board books and clothing for children up to a year old in families of those serving in the military.

The drive is going on now and your donations would be greatly appreciated. The collection box is outside the main office.

Parents for Others meets in the Toddler Room the second Friday of every month from 3:45 - 4:45 p.m. All parents are welcome with their young children. Check out the "Parents for Others" blog: www.parentsforothers.wordpress.com. For more information, contact Catherine Kennedy: cskennedy1981@yahoo.com.

Good Samaritan Fund needs you

By Marty Worth, Program Manager

As I was writing this, our November Good Samaritan Day was approaching. We expected to have many people lined up at the door when we opened at 9 a.m. As always, our biggest fear was how to help all these people.



In October, 75% of the requests we had were for help in paying utility bills. Articles in the paper have stated that agencies helping with utility bills are overwhelmed. Winter is upon us and the need will only increase.

During worship on All Saints Day, we talked about not only the saints of the church today but also about the saints of First Church who established the Good Samaritan Fund years ago. They followed in the long tradition of helping those in need, beginning with the Good Samaritan in the Bible and then through the ages with saints, some recognized but many others doing justice unrecognized. I work with many of these kinds of people through our assistance program, as churches and agencies help each other to help others. Our dedicated volunteers come every month to help on "Good Sam" day.

Everyone who comes fills out an application. When I started four years ago, the applications of all those we helped in a year filled two large notebooks. This year, through September, we had filled seven notebooks, and we expect to fill two more by year's end.

The endowment fund quarterly contributions set the stage for the fund to operate, but your individual contributions are vital to us being able to make it through the year. Checks may be sent to the church: 444 E.

Mission Offerings Schedule

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

December 7: Columbus AIDS Task Force

December 14: Bethlehem on Broad Street - First Church's Christmas Day dinner for the needy.

December 21: Christmas Fund - Donations benefit retired United Church of Christ ministers.

December 24 (Both Christmas Eve services): Christmas Fund

December 28: Good Samaritan: First Church's monthly assistance program.

Recent Celebration Gifts to First Church

By Bill Johannes and Jane Werum

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

Karen E. Maxson

Karen Davis Mayer

Ruth L. Smith

John and Muriel Siddall

Diana Ferguson

Shun and Pauline Endo

Tamara Evans

John and Betsy Zahn

Patricia Kochensparger

Margaret Atkinson

Bill and Natalie Wright

Given to the Social Concerns Endowment Fund in celebration of the life of Wally Cannon by:

David and Artis Holt

Given to the Music, Arts, and Heritage Endowment Fund in celebration of the life of Ben Bechtel by:

David and Artis Holt

Given to the Jackie Owen Memorial Music Endowment Fund in celebration of the life of Jackie Owen by:

William Owen

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

John and Betsy Zahn

Siena Dominican Assoc. Group

Phyllis and C S Wechsle

Joanne Morse

Harry Guynn

Bill and Natalie Wright

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.

Missions & Announcements



Fair Trade Coffee For The Holidays

The Missions Committee has a green offer for the holiday: fair trade coffee for a Fair Trade Christmas! Give the same great coffee, tea and hot chocolate we serve at Fellowship Hour to all your friends and family this Christmas.



We are selling coffee for \$7 a bag, tea for \$4 and hot chocolate for \$6 a can. For an additional \$1 a package, the Mission Committee team will gift wrap your purchases! Come to the coffee sales table in the Parish Hall the first or third Sunday of the month, or contact Nancy Burba in the church office on Wednesdays, to place your order. All orders must be prepaid. The final date to place an order is Sunday, Dec. 7. Your gift of coffee, tea or hot chocolate will be ready to pick up by mid-December.

Fellowship Hour Beverage Sales: Coffee and tea sales will be available on Dec. 7 and 21 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.

Gift Cards Requested For Gladden Teens

The Gladden Community House staff would like \$20 gift cards from discount stores for the teens who are served by GCH. Firefighters provide toys for the children and United Way takes care of the seniors, but no organization is covering the teens.

Please include the Gladden teens on your Christmas list. Gift cards may be left in the tin on the volunteer's desk in the office. Cards are needed by Dec. 17. The Missions Commission thanks you.

Volunteers Needed: Friends of Alum Creek and Tributaries needs volunteers to help plant trees and shrubs and remove honeysuckle along the Alum Creek corridor from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Nelson Park, 430 N. Nelson Rd., on Saturday, Nov. 22. Phone 614-409-0511 or visit www.friendsofalumcreek.org.

BOBS Getting Ready to Start

Those wishing to help with this year's Bethlehem on Broad Street Christmas Day dinner should call 614-228-7338, or email bethonbrst@aol.com. Volunteers will be contacted after Dec. 1.

There will be brochures available in the church, with details of this year's volunteer opportunities, and information on the Web site.

Member Happy December Birthdays

| | | | |
|--------|-----------------|--------|----------------------|
| 12/1: | John Rau | 12/18: | Mary Alice Kuhn |
| 12/3: | Darel Finley | 12/19: | Carol Hussey |
| 12/3: | Leslie Fulford | 12/19: | Larry Dixon |
| 12/3: | Molly Herzog | 12/19: | Bob Davis |
| 12/4: | Elaine Warren | 12/19: | Barry Bastian |
| 11/4: | Frank Cook | 12/20: | Margaret Browne |
| 12/5: | Madeline Hadley | 12/20: | Christa Ewing |
| 12/5: | Jason Bishop | 12/21: | Joyce Canfield |
| 12/6: | Kay Davis | 12/21: | Dorothy Leachman |
| 12/6: | Joanne Avers | 12/21: | Andrew Thomas |
| 12/6: | Tom Danneberger | 12/22: | Rick Henderson |
| 12/6: | Diane Rambo | 12/22: | Ellie Zeiger |
| 12/7: | Natalie Wright | 12/23: | Marty Worth |
| 12/7: | Seth Browne | 12/24: | Lee Ann Hadley |
| 12/8: | Janet Axt | 12/25: | Elaine Fennell |
| 12/8: | Kent Rambo | 12/25: | Diana Kutschbach |
| 12/10: | Brian Thomas | 12/25: | Benjamin Brant |
| 12/11: | Sam Spofforth | 12/26: | Trisha Bishop |
| 12/11: | Charlie White | 12/27: | David Fulford |
| 12/13: | Anne Aldrich | 12/27: | Rachel Axt |
| 12/13: | Joe Provenzano | 12/28: | Paul Leidheiser |
| 12/14: | Elizabeth Asp | 12/28: | JohnRomo |
| 12/14: | Dan Ward | 12/28: | McAshan Dean |
| 12/14: | Pamm Greene | 12/29: | James Organ |
| 12/14: | Suzie Rhoads | 12/29: | Ben Rowley |
| 12/14: | Lori Horne | 12/30: | Jamie McWilliams |
| 12/14: | Gretchen Welle | 12/30: | Tracy Cloud-Thomas |
| 12/15: | Anne Bennett | 12/31: | Jim Roehm |
| 12/17: | Dale Leidheiser | 12/31: | Jon Anderson |
| 12/17: | Jane Leidheiser | 12/31: | Catherine Cunningham |
| 12/17: | Lori Tisher | | |

Member Happy Anniversaries

| | |
|--------|---------------------------------|
| 12/1: | Todd and Mary Hills |
| 12/10: | Robert and Diana Kutschbach |
| 12/12: | Ronald and Linda Reiger |
| 12/13: | Nathanael and Sarah Gray |
| 12/19: | Gerald and Martha Worth |
| 12/20: | Alton and Elaine Fennell |
| 12/20: | Jorge and Teresa Polo |
| 12/22: | John and Virginia Matney |
| 12/23: | Michael and Jane Weddle |
| 12/26: | Sheldon and Rebecca Taft |
| 12/27: | Thomas and Sarah Trace |
| 12/27: | Richard and Jane Ward |
| 12/28: | Ian and Rebecca Baird |
| 12/29: | Andrew and Pamela Welsh-Huggins |
| 12/30: | Thomas and Mary Alice Kuhn |
| 12/31: | Darel and Shawn Finley |

OOPS! If we miss your birthday or anniversary, let us know by contacting the church office at 614.228.1741, ext. 17, or by emailing dmahoney@first-church.org.

Church Calendar

Sunday, November 23, Celebration Sunday

8 am-3 pm: Blood Drive - C & D
9 am: Early Worship Service - PH
9 am: Treble Choir - Choir Rm
9 am: Nominating Committee - PFR
10 am: Education Hour
10 am: First Church Choir - Choir Rm
11 am: Worship Service - San
12 pm: Fellowship Hour - PH
12:30-2 pm: Confirmation Class - Rm D

Tuesday, November 25

Noon: First Church Care Ministry Team - PR
7 pm: Personnel - LC

Wednesday, November 26

9 am: Staff Meeting - LC

Thursday, November 27, Thanksgiving

Office and Building Closed

Friday, November 28

Office and Building Closed

6 pm: Faith Misson Family Shelter lunches

Saturday, November 29

Noon: Youth Lock-In

Sunday, November 30

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
12:15 pm: Hanging of the Greens - LC/San/PR

Tuesday, December 2

Noon: First Church Care Ministry Team - PR
6:30 pm: Children's Ed - Rm C
7 pm: Deacons - PR
7 pm: Evangelism and Church Growth - PR
7 pm: Executive Committee - PFR

Wednesday, December 3

9 am: Staff Meeting - LC

Thursday, December 4

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

Sunday, December 7

9 am: Early Worship Service - PH
9 am: Nominating Committee - PFR
9 am: Treble Choir - Choir Rm
10 am: First Church Choir - Choir Rm
10 am: Education Hour
11 am: Worship Service - San
Noon: Fellowship Hour - PH
3 pm: Youth Group (Wexner Center) - PH
12:15 pm: Parish Life - PR
12:30 pm: Confirmation Class - Rm D

Monday, December 8

7 pm: Trustees - PR

Tuesday, December 9

Noon: First Church Care Ministry Team - PR
6 pm: Music Committee - PR
7 pm: Missions Committee - PR

Wednesday, December 10

9 am: Staff Meeting - LC
7 pm: Young Adult Ministry - Rm D

Thursday, December 11

10 am: Eastside Fellowship - Natalie Wright's home
6:15 pm: First Church Handbells - Bell Rm
7:30 pm: First Church Choir - Choir Rm

Friday, December 12

3:45 pm: Parents for Others - Toddler Rm

Saturday, December 13

9 am-Noon: Mew Members Class - Choir Rm
10 am: Quilters of First Church - LC

Sunday, December 14

8:30 am: Christmas Cookie Mission - Ed Wg Rm C
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
5:15 pm: Reception - PR
6 pm: Christmas Play and Dinner - PH

Monday, December 15

6 p.m: Stephen Ministers - Adult Lib
7 pm: Budget and Finance - LC

Tuesday, December 16

Noon: First Church Care Ministry Team - PR
7 pm: Church Council - LC

Wednesday, December 17

9 am: Staff Meeting - PR
9 am: Newsletter Folding - LC
11 am: Book Study Group - PR

Thursday, December 18

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

Saturday, December 20

9 am: House & Grounds - LC
11:30 am: Building Staff Meeting Lunch - LC

Sunday, December 21

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: Lessons and Carols - San

Tuesday, December 23

Noon: First Church Care Ministry Team - PR
7:30 pm: Personnel Committee - LC

Wednesday, December 24

9 am: Staff Meeting - LC (Office closes at 12:30 pm)
6 pm: Makeup call for pageant - Bell Rm
6:30 pm: Bell Ringers - Gallery
7:30 pm: Worship service (pageant) - San
10 pm: First Church Choir - Choir Rm
11 pm: Christmas Eve Communion Service - San

Thursday, December 25

Office and Building closed

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

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.



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

December Fellowship Hour

December 7: Numbers - Julia Myers
December 14: Proverbs - Pat Patterson
December 21: Psalms - Bill Rhoads
December 28: Romans - Helen Spears

November & December Acolyte Schedule

November 23: Katie Geis & Meri Roach
November 30: Emma Welsh-Huggins
December 7: Anna Rhoads & Meg Rhoads
December 14: Gabby Murphy & Carly Kutschbach
December 21: Katie Wagner & Cameron Wade
December 28: Thomas Welsh-Huggins & Reel Chaudhri

Next Newsletter Deadline

Articles Due: Monday, December 8 by noon
Email: dmahoney@first-church.org
Folding Team: Wed., December 17, 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

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DATED MATERIAL - VERY IMPORTANT

PLEASE DELIVER: *Monday, November 24, 2008*

TO:

[Empty dashed box for recipient address]



The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
444 E. Broad St. Col.s., 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