

Congregational Comments

Vol. 20 No 4: April 2015

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Office Hours: Mon. –Thursday, 8:00-4:30

Worship and Sunday School Times

9:00 am - Traditional Worship Service

9:15-10:15 am Sunday School

10:00 am - Fellowship Hour

11:00 am - Contemporary Worship
Service

11:15-12:00 am Sunday School



*First Congregational
United Church of
Christ
“A united and
uniting church”*

Our Mission is to worship God,
Welcome all who seek God, and
Express our faith in our actions.



Pastor Dave Taylor

FROM THE PASTOR

**A TIME FOR
TRANFORMATION**

In our hurried world, we scarcely arrive at one event, one holiday, before the world tells us, "Hurry up! Time to move on to the next big thing!" Our cool mornings and

warm afternoons remind us, however, that the earth's seasons will not be rushed or manipulated.

So, too, does the church practice this rather counter-cultural habit of marking seasons, not simply Holy Days. We are now in the season of Lent, which leads us into the season of Easter. In several weeks, we will begin the long season of Pentecost.

A quaint practice? Outdated?

Perhaps. Or maybe it is exactly what our souls, and minds and bodies, need: time to allow the implications of each major observance to sink in. There is far too much depth, richness, and opportunity to try and contain it all in one day.

Easter is a great example of this. When all the beautiful flowers are gone, the chocolate consumed, the Easter breakfast decorations put away, what of Easter remains? "Christ is risen" is joined by the distinct implication that there are consequences and repercussions. "Christ is risen," and therefore the whole equation has changed. "Christ is risen," and therefore suffering, pain, even death, are transformed. God has the last word. What will be the Easter repercussions in our lives? Can we not dare to hope, even when times seem less than hopeful, because the times are in God's hands? Can we not choose to love extravagantly, because God has shown us how to do just that, in spite of pain and even death? Can we not allow ourselves the freedom to discover new joy in unexpected ways and places and people; for God managed to create new joy with a rolled away stone and a few frightened followers?

Welcome the transforming gift of Easter. Like those early disciples, unlock the doors, let in the fresh air, leave the old hiding place behind. One author says, "I want to declare an open-door policy of the heart; it gets wearisome scrutinizing everyone through the peephole before sliding the deadbolt free. What we celebrate so joyously on Easter Sunday only marks the beginning.

God is set loose in the world, sharing love, hope, compassion, grace, peace, joy, justice and more, drawing forth new life in any way possible. Alleluia!

O Spirit of Christ, fill us with the transforming power of the Resurrection, that we might experience and be a part of the power of God's life-giving love to all creation. Amen.

Come join us at First Congregational United Church of Christ as we worship Christ, our Risen Savior, and discover with us the transforming power of Easter that fills the everyday lives of God's people and the world.

Have a blessed and joyous Easter!
Pastor Dave

**JOIN US FOR OUR
SPECIAL SERVICES**

April 2th at 7 pm: Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service with Holy Communion. We through scripture and candlelight we remember Jesus' life, love, and sacrifice for all humankind.

April 5 Have a blessed Easter!!
Join us at First Church as the Son rises in our hearts and our world today!

- 7 am** Easter Sunrise Youth Service
 - 8 am** Easter Breakfast – good food and fellowship
 - 9 am** Easter Worship Service
 - 11:00 am** Easter Contemporary Service
- Holy Communion will be served at all services

**REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR AND VISIT MEMBERS
WHO ARE IN NURSING HOMES**

Primrose Retirement Community

Claude Young—Room 228

Hickory Point Christian Village

Mary Lou Phipps— #210

Celeste Ritter—#304

Imboden Gardens

Harriette Horn—#120

Vonderlieth Living Center, Mt. Pulaski, IL

Alice Roach

Illinois Veteran's Home, Quincy, IL

Bob Henry

These are all I know about at this time. Please let me know if you know of others.

Bill Huebner wshuebner.editor@prodigy.net

THANK YOU

The Gideons International

Thank you very much. The \$260 will buy approx. 164 testaments or approx. 52 Bibles.

Harold Nickey

Dear Pastor Dave,

Thank you for the lovely memorial service for Dad last week. Your works , and in your letter, were very comforting. The music was lovely and lunch was so nice. It was good to have time to talk with family and friends.

Good news on Mon's situation—she is coming home from the nursing home today. She'll be glad to be home.

Sincerely, Cheryl, Mark, Ann & Steve Stringer.



In Cambodia, a family's rice field flourishes through drought

Foods Resource Bank's Cambodia-South program #5018

Led by World Renew and various local partners

Bunthoeun, 45, his wife and their four children had a successful rice harvest in spite of last year's drought because of the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) he'd learned through FRB's Cambodia-South program. He also applied appropriate farming and poultry-raising techniques he'd mastered at the program's hands-on Farmer Field School (FFS). The various new methods allowed him to provide diverse and nutritious food for his family, and he even had some surplus rice, produce and chickens to sell at the local market. With his newly acquired capital, he has been able to expand his rice field.



Bunthoeun was not always so successful. For many years his rice harvests were poor, and he and his wife struggled to grow vegetables and raise chickens. After continual failures, they were eventually forced to ask two of their children to drop out of school and migrate to Phnom Penh to work in the garment factories.



When the FFS began meeting in his village in 2012, Bunthoeun decided to join. "After becoming a member of the FFS, I learned a lot about agriculture techniques. I never missed a class, was always able to practice what I learned, and got good results," he explained.

With their farming activities expanding, Bunthoeun and his wife can now focus on the education of their two children still living at home. They put a lot of importance on savings so that these two will be able to complete high school, a dream that had vanished for their two older children.

Bunthoeun's positive experiences have reaffirmed his commitment to his farm as a real way to provide for his family and build a future for his children. He enthusiastically shares his know-how with others in his community.

Cambodia-South encompasses 17 communities, 681 households and 4086 individuals

This program has been funded in part by FRB's Community Growing Projects. For more information or to support this program or others like it, please visit the Overseas Program page on our website www.foodsresourcebank.org or call 888-276-4FRB



Our Church will collect this offering starting on March 22 and will end this fund drive Easter Sunday.

2015 Theme,

Scripture Reference 2 Corinthians 8:13-15

Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality.

At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, as it is written: "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."

Through One Great Hour of Sharing, lives are literally changed daily. Your support provides clean water, food, medicines, shelter, healthcare, education and so much more. In 2013, the OGHS offering reached \$2,478,536. An additional \$720 thousand was received to support specific disaster relief initiatives.

You can find OGHS on the web: www.ucc.org/oghs, and on Facebook and Twitter.

1. What is One Great Hour of Sharing®?

One Great Hour of Sharing, as part of Our Churches Wider Mission, is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God's message of love and hope to people in 138 countries. The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water and food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, emergency relief, and advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons. OGHS also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response.

2. Who participates in One Great Hour of Sharing?

Eight Christian denominations - *American Baptist Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Church of the Brethren, Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and Church World Service* work together to develop common promotional materials thereby shar-

ing ideas, costs, and a commitment to faithful service. Each denomination receives and manages its respective OGHS offerings, and together raise about \$12 million each year.

3. How is the United Church of Christ's offering used?

More than 60 percent of the UCC's offering supports international development initiatives, including annual support for missionaries. Currently there are 7 OGHS supported missionaries and 2 Global Mission Interns working in disaster relief, health care, education, and agricultural development. The offering funds disaster preparedness and response, and disaster related volunteer initiatives in the U.S.

4. Where and how are OGHS funds shared?

The United Church of Christ responds to development, disaster, and refugee needs in 138 countries, and provides disaster relief and immigration assistance in the United States.

Funding decisions are made by asking our worldwide mission partners, "What would you have us do with you?" The United Church of Christ responds as a member of organizations such as Church World Service and the ACT Alliance. We also support the direct mission efforts of churches and church-based organizations that the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have direct partnerships with through Global Ministries. Nearly one-third of the UCC's offering is shared through Church World Service to support refugee, disaster, development, and advocacy programs.

5. How many dollars are given to the UCC's OGHS offering?

In 2012, the OGHS offering received just over \$2.5 million. Nearly seventy percent of UCC congregations participate annually.

6. What percentage of OGHS donations are used directly for mission?

On average, of every dollar given to One Great Hour of Sharing, 91 cents is used directly for mission programming; 5 cents for interpretation materials and 4 cents for administrative costs which include program monitoring and evaluation (for accountability). Most administrative costs are paid by gifts to Our Church's Wider Mission National Basic Support and endowment funds.

7. How are decisions made to fund the various projects?

Currently, the OGHS Program Committee of the Wider Church Ministries Board meets semi-annually to review expenditures and to address initiatives to increase the promotion of the offering for the United Church of Christ. In addition, a leadership committee is in place that reviews grant requests for special projects internationally.

8. How can I contribute to One Great Hour of Sharing?

The OGHS special mission offering is received through local UCC congregations and all UCC members are encouraged to participate in this way. Local churches will forward gifts to the conference office and all gifts will be forwarded to the United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100. You may also make a secure on-line contributions by visiting our One Great Hour of Sharing website at www.ucc.org/oghs, and click on the "Donate" button. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
			1 4:15—7:15 LOGOS
5 EASTER 7:00 Youth Sev. 8:00 Breakfast 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary	6	7 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Adult Choir 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	8 4:15—7:15 LOGOS
12 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	13 5:30 Admin Meeting 7:00 Property	14 Elections FH 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	15 7:00 Adult
19 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	20 7:00 Church Council	21 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	22 7:00 Adult
26 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	27	28 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	29 7:00 Adult

	Thu	Fri	Sat
15	2 7:00 Maundy Thursday Service.	3	4
15	9 5:45 First Ringers	10	11
lt Choir	16 1:15 Book Club 5:45 First Ringers	17	18
lt Choir	23 5:45 First Ringers	24	25 5
lt Choir	30 5:45 First Ringers		

ADULT MINISTRY

Super evening was had by all who attended the Soup and Games Night.

We had 33 people, 15 wonderful varieties of super soups, ice-cream sundaes and root beer floats and several rounds of Bunco. A little over \$150.00 was donated to the event and this will go into the church maintenance fund.

Adult Ministry



FEBRUARY 2015 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>Feb 15</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$17,753.08	\$35,506.16
Budget Expense	\$17,437.57	\$34,875.14
Income	\$21,309.00	\$36,461.26
Expenses	\$19,075.97	\$32,250.04

All Things to All People

Elissa Johnk

"To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. [...] To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people" - 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Dear Paul:

All things to all people? Really?

Here's the thing, Paul: you had a wonderful, tradition-inspiring gift for words. You were, let's be honest, the creator of the sound-bite. But sometimes those 30-second snippets are misleading.

I am positive you were *not* a full-time tent-maker and traveling evangelist, while also being a loyal and devoted family-man, who took care of his relatives, made dinners, cleaned the house, and still had the energy to take his partner out on a romantic date now and then.

You know why I'm certain? Because it's not possible.

I know plenty of people who try to do all those things (except, maybe, the tent-making) because they think it is their good, Christian duty. "I must," they repeat, "be all things to all people." They end up in my office – frazzled, anxious, depressed, and suffering from one broken relationship after another.

I know this isn't what you meant. You know that being everything to everyone usually means nothing to anyone. I'm pretty sure you meant you were able to do one thing, with one person (or group) at a time. And that one thing? It was love.

Jewish, Gentile, weak, powerful – whoever, whatever, however – you *loved* them. You joined people where and as they were, so they might know the love of *God* who joins them where they are.

So can we publish a clarification – an editor's note, of sorts?

You, Paul, called to be an apostle of God by Christ Jesus, were ***not*** all things to all people. You were one thing – love – to one person at a time.

Yet, through the miracle of the gospel, that's more than enough to reach us all.

Sincerely,

Elissa (on behalf of the tired everywhere)

Prayer

All-knowing, all-capable God, remind me I am not You - and you don't want me to be. When I'm tempted to do it all, remind me it is (hard) enough to do the one thing you *do* ask of all people - to love the person in front of me right now. And then help me do it? Amen.



Children's Ministry News!

There will be Combined Sunday School for the Children on Easter Sunday during first service with Kate Slingerland.

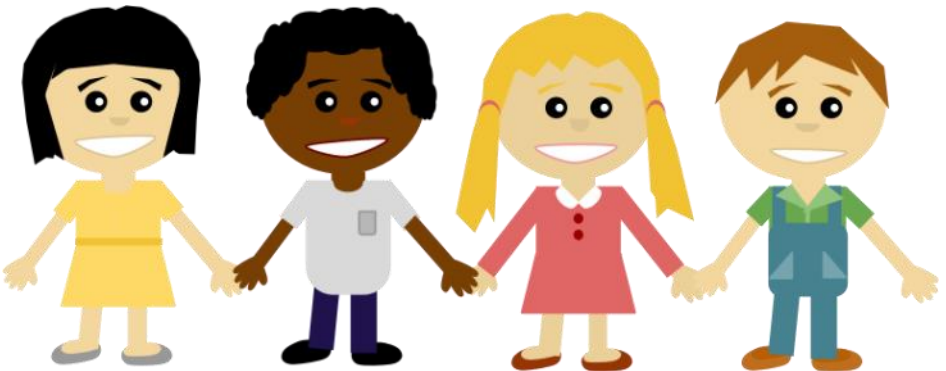
Calling All Campers!! Any children or youth interested in attending camp please let Debbie Moster know.

Tenderfoot Camp (Completed K-2nd) Spirit Camp (Completed 3rd-9th)

Dates: Tenderfoot Camp: July 16-18 with Terri Kelly

Spirit Camp: July 13-18 with Sara & Diane

Transportation will be provided. You can contact Debbie Moster @ 876-7449 or dmoster@sbcglobal.net



VBS NEWS

SAVE THE DATES for VBS 2015 at First Church! It is time to start thinking and praying about your involvement in this year's VBS program. It promises to be another action-packed, fun-filled week. Plans are taking shape, but we are still looking for YOU to help us make it another successful year. Serving as co-directors again this year are Marsha Mower and Maureen Ruski. We have a few people that have already committed to join us, but will need lots of additional help to make this a wonderful experience for all involved. As we have the past few years, we want to make this a church-wide endeavor, involving as many people and ministries as possible. We are committed to reaching out to children in our church family and the community. So, don't miss out on this opportunity to be involved!

Our theme is *EVEREST - Conquering Challenges with God's Mighty Power*. We will meet Klymer, Cliff, Mallory, Pike and Veddy as they help us with our daily Bible Point, Story and Key Verse. We will have an amazing adventure that will help kids (and adults) explore God's incredible power and love for his children. The dates are Sunday, July 26 – Thursday, July 30 from 6:00-8:30, with the preschool children having the option of leaving at 8:05 and dinner available for the volunteers at 5:15.

Areas of need include: Adult Leaders and Assistants for Bible Expeditions, KidVid Cinema, Imagination Station, Mountaintop Treats, Glacier Games, Spotlight VBS (videographer/photographer), Base Camp Sing & Play (opening), Summit Celebration (closing) and Preschool Peak; Crew Leaders and Assistants to shuttle the children through the events each evening; Registration; Decorations; possibly Child Care; Volunteer/Staff Meals and sound/digital projection tech. We will need help with set-up before and take-down after. Those children who complete 6th grade this school year are invited to join us as Assistant Crew Leaders. We also have "staff spots" for mature and responsible Jr/Sr High youth to assist in the various areas.

Please let us know as soon as possible where you will help. THANKS! Marsha Mower



God bless you on your birthday and each day the whole year through. May all His blessings bring you joy in everything you do.

1. Norma Jean Lingenfelter
2. Jill Stogner
3. Doris Teer
4. Michael Koyak
Elizabeth Scherer
William Schoettle
5. Kim Tsuda
Levi Goodman
Lois Hofstetter
6. Lucas Goodman
John Priester
7. Jeanette Flenner
Joshua Mower
9. Paige Tsuda
10. Morgan Malone
12. Edward Smith
14. Bob Blackwell
Betty Henry
17. Sandi Pleasants
Bruce Whitney
Katie Slingerland
18. Brittany Mueller
19. Joe Moretti
David Taylor
22. Brianna Hill
Lindsay Langan
23. David Gant
25. Megan Hartman
Vicky Williams
26. Byron Beede
Delaney Dabrowka

- Jalynn Martin
- Kristin Hargrove
28. Mark Bunselmeyer
29. Logan Moster
Robert Cordes
30. Kay Janvrin
Libby Fisher
Heather Martin

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES:

And may the many blessings that have come from God above fill your hearts with all the joys of His enduring love. Happy Anniversary!

3. Jeff & Erin Toberman
7. Kenneth & Kathleen Johnson
8. Joshua & Julie Mower
12. Edward & Martha Smith
15. Patrick & Margie Malone
16. Roger & Melinda Redman
19. Eugene & Nellie Brookhouzen
20. Jeffrey & Connie Mockaitis
23. John & Shawn Painter
27. Joe & Melissa Flies

APRIL

FIRST SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

APRIL 2

LITURGIST: Bobbie Taylor
USHERS/GREETER: Jim & Jodi Baldwin, Howard Beede, Frank Smith

APRIL 5

LITURGIST: chuck Zweck
FLOWERS: Easter Flowers
COFFEE: Everett Kuhn
USHERS/GREETER: Tom & Paula Cordts, Marilee Gordon, Howard Beede

APRIL 12

LITURGIST: Bill Huebner
FLOWERS: Homer & Nancy Leoucis
COFFEE: Sandi Pleasants
USHERS/GREETER: Kristin Hargrove, Marilyn Cushing, Al & Ann Gerhold

APRIL 19

LITURGIST: Amy Leman
FLOWERS:
COFFEE: Jim & Jodi Baldwin
USHERS/GREETER: Ev Kuhn, Ellen Starace, Ted & Darby Mitchell

APRIL 26

LITURGIST: Darla Weltmer
FLOWERS: Dave & Marlene Gant
COFFEE: Darla & Lynn Weltmer
USHERS/GREETER: Jim & Jodi Baldwin

SECOND SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

APRIL 5

USHER/GREETER: Betty Wheatley
REFRESHMENTS: Betty Wheatley

APRIL 12

USHER/GREETER: Leigh Myers
REFRESHMENTS: Alex & Angie Miller

APRIL 19

USHER/GREETER: Bruce & Debbie Whitney
REFRESHMENTS: Bruce & Debbie Whitney

APRIL 26

USHER/GREETER: Praise Band
REFRESHMENTS: Missy Boldizar



HAPPY 100th BIRTHDAY MARY HAMMAN

