

Congregational Comments

Vol. 20 No 8: August 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

“TEN WAYS to...” -

It seems that just about everywhere one looks these days, there is a list giving advice of one form or another. In email, print ads, TV, radio you find them: *Five Tips to Improve Your Golf*

Game! Seven Steps to Increase Your IQ! Lower Your Cholesterol With Three Easy Changes!

I like lists and having things broken down into simple, doable steps. Sometimes lists can help us regain some hope of control and meaningful change. So, I thought I'd offer a list, based on questions I have asked and answers that you may find helpful. Here is the list; I invite you to add to it!

Simple things? Not always. But the rewards can be great. They may not improve your golf game or increase your IQ, but if you are like me, sometimes all it takes is a small change to turn a bad day around. So what would you add to this list?

TEN WAYS TO CHANGE THINGS FOR THE BETTER

(Your Life, Your Community, Your World)

- 1. Pray. Meditate.** Work out a prayer practice that works for you and stick with it each day. Don't worry about the words or the form. Just open up with God.
- 2. Start and end the day with gratitude.** There will always be something, even something small, for which you can give thanks. Gratitude has a healing, spirit-deepening effect.
- 3. Stretch yourself: physically, spiritually, emotionally.** Recognize the internal chatter that keeps you from such stretching, and change the channel.
- 4. Take a step toward forgiveness,** whether forgiving yourself, someone else, a group, or God. As Anne Lamott says, *“Withholding forgiveness is like drinking rat poison and waiting for the rat to die.”*
- 5. Play.** Recover your joy. Blow bubbles, dance, paint, mud

wrestle, shoot hoops. Play a game.

6. **Ask brave questions.** Do I really want to get unstuck? Am I being totally honest? What am I not seeing/hearing? Am I doing my best for God? What could I do better for God? for others?

7. **Worship.** When we worship together we reaffirm we are not alone and it is not all on our shoulders. Not to mention the good food and friends at Fellowship Hour!

8. **Take a risk for someone else's sake.** Volunteer, advocate, offer help, show up. Make a Holy Difference!

9. **Do one truly loving thing each day.**

10. **Make space for grace.** Take a break from keeping track of all that is wrong, and receive and offer grace instead. Grace is unearned goodness, acceptance, kindness. Grace is discovering you can float when you thought you were drowning

We invite you to join us in worship:

9:00 AM for Traditional Service,
10:00 AM for fellowship and refreshments, and
11:00 AM for our Contemporary Service.

Check out our interesting Adult Bible Studies.

In Christ's Peace and Love,

Pastor Dave



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— Room 210

Imboden Gardens

Harriette Horn—Room120

Keystone

Carolyn Jones—Room 216

Vonderlieth Living Center, Mt. Pulaski, IL

Alice Roach

Fair Havens Christian Home

Al Wilson—Room 425



THANK YOU

We want to thank our fiends at First Congregation UCC for your many cards and prayers in the last few months during our time of being diagnosed and hope to find a treatment that will help.

Gratefully, Wally & Tonita Reifsteck

WOMEN'S RETREAT

Last year, four members of First Congregational United Church of Christ ventured north and attended the Women's Retreat. All of us enjoyed the experience and would like to invite the women of the church to join us at the 5th annual Illinois Conference Women's Retreat on Friday and Saturday, October 2 and 3 at Pilgrim Park. Flyers are in the narthex if you would like additional information. The theme this year is "Retreat into Chocolate: Indulge Yourself and Savor the Sweet Abundance of God's Love".

Sandy Harmison



Lamentation

Quinn G. Caldwell

"They shall call the farmers to mourning, and those skilled in lamentation to wailing..." - Amos 5:10-17

"I'm getting good at this," a parishioner said. "I don't want to be good at this."

Over the past year, two close family members and a friend had died unexpectedly, and we were planning yet another funeral. Funerals are not the kind of thing that most people, with the possible exception of morticians and ministers, want to get good at.

We may not have professional mourners for hire as they did in Amos' day, but there are people who've been through so much grief that their amateur status is definitely in question. What I notice more often than not, at least in the church, is that the saints who have become skilled at lamentation also tend to have become skilled at other things: gentleness, generosity, commiseration, comforting. They're the ones who can do that thing with their eyes where they make you feel like they feel bad for you without pitying you. They're the ones who can hug you without creeping you out, even if you normally dislike hugs from strangers. They're the ones who can say things that would sound like platitudes coming from anybody else.

It's not the kind of thing anybody wants to be good at, but thank God for the people who are.

Prayer

God who grieves every death and who mourns the fall of every sparrow, you knew this pain before any of us felt it. Don't give me the opportunity to become TOO good at lamentation, but grant that every grief I bear might show me how to help others bear theirs. Amen.

Quinn G. Caldwell is the Pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church, Syracuse, New York.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
2 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellowship Hour 11:00 Contemporary	3	4 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	5
9 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellowship Hour 11:00 Contemporary	10 5:30 Admin Meeting 6:00 Worship/ Music 7:00 Property	11 — SUMMER — 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	12 FLIC 9:00-1
16 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellowship Hour 11:00 Contemporary	17 7:00 Church Council	18 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	19
23 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellowship Hour 11:00	24	25 1:00 God's Busy Hands 4:30 AAUW 7:00 Al-anon	26 9:00-4:00
30 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellowship Hour 11:00	31		

Thu	Fri	Sat
		1
6	7	8 Wedding
13 PLAYMATES 12:00 1:00 Decatur Woman's Club	14	15
20 1:15 Book Club	21	22
27 RUMMAGE 9:00-4:00	28 SALE 8:00-4:00	29 8:00-11:00



Women's Fellowship Annual Rummage Sale

NEW DATES FOR WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP ANNUAL RUMMAGE SALE The new date is August 26 and 27th 9:00 - 4:00 for setting up the rummage sale. We will serve lunch at noon on Wed. and have a short business meeting. The sale will begin at 8:00 AM till 4:00 PM on Fri and Sat. from 8:00 - 11:00. Cleanup will start at 11:15 and we will need volunteers to help box up anything not sold and take down to Blessingdales and then clean up Fellowship Hall and get it ready for Sunday!!

We need help getting the tables set up on Wed. morning plus get the racks out of the furnace room, dust off and bring into Fellowship Hall. Any volunteers to help us with that? OR I an meet you Tues evening if you can't help on Wed. morning.

Lets make this a wonderful big sale and finally get the rummage all gone from the building. We need everyone's rummage, especially heavier clothes now that its so late PLUS man power help. Can we count on you? Any questions or further information contact Darla, 877-7008, Sandi 877-4394, Martha 877-7468, Ellen W. 875-0835 or Norma 877-3952. THANKS IN ADVANCE!

JUNE 2015 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>June 15</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$17,753.08	\$105,518.48
Budget Expense	\$17,437.57	\$104,625.42
Income	\$15,540.24	\$108,923.28
Expenses	\$24,934.11	\$101,436.23



God's Busy Hands

God's Busy Hands delivered blankets to: Cancer Care Center, Kidney Dialysis Center, Head Start and God's Shelter of Love home. Pat Mahr and I were thanked gratefully – so appreciative – and some checked out the details of the blanket! It certainly made me feel good and proud to be a part of the group at First Church!

If you know of a group in town that would like small blankets for infants & toddlers, wraps to put around shoulders or knees and large blankets for those at kidney dialysis; please let us know the name of the group and a contact person if you know that.

Alice Huebner
Pat Mahr



Returning the favor

When a mother came home from the hospital, she had to be confined to bed for several days. Her 9-year-old daughter came home from school one afternoon and peeked into her mother's room. Thinking that her mother was asleep, the little girl tiptoed into the room, quietly unfolded the blanket at the foot of the bed, and gently tucked it around her mother. The mother stirred, and then whispered, "You know, it wasn't too long ago that I was tucking you in. And now you're doing it for me. Thank you."

The daughter replied, "That's okay; around here we take turns."

RALLY DAY SEPTEMBER 13

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! RALLY DAY SEPT. 13th, 2015

This year we'll be featuring Amazing Dudley the Magician at our Annual Rally Day Celebration! You won't want to miss this! Fun for all ages!

Lunch (sandwiches and salads) will be served inside from 12:00-12:30

Amazing Dudley Magician inside from 12:30-1:00

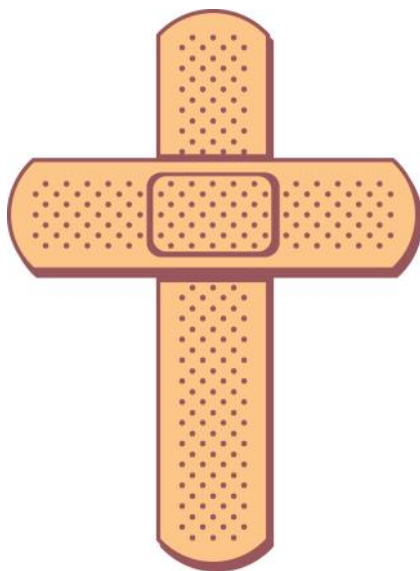
Games and activities outside including Cupcake/Cookie Walk, new Giant Jenga, our favorites Plunko and Ring Toss, new Kerplunk, and an Adult favorite Bingo inside! New prizes and treats this year!

Please spread the word! And bring your friends! ☐

Prayer — it's in our genes

I don't think prayer is merely a sociological phenomenon. I don't think it's something we do just to fit into a community or when we've exhausted all other options. I think it's hardwired into our spiritual DNA. God is the inevitability of humanity's search for true meaning.

—Jared Brock, A Year of Living Prayerfully



Skinned knees

Leaders aspire to look like small boys in August. If you raise children or grandchildren, you know that by the end of August, they've been running around all summer in their shorts, sneakers and T-shirts. You also know that their knees and their elbows are always skinned, their shins always black and blue and that they have the marks of the summer's fracas on their faces. A 6-year-old boy at the end of August is my picture of a leader.

I got that picture from David Hubbard, president of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena. Many years ago he told me that leaders need to learn not to inflict pain but to bear pain. It seems to me that if you're bearing pain properly as a leader, whether you're a preacher, a college professor, a parent or a teacher, you ought to have the marks of the struggle. One ought to have bruised shins and skinned knees.

—Max DePree, Leadership Jazz



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. Paula Cordts
Sicily Seitz
5. Katie Malone
Judy Koyak
Tyler Wernecke
Vicki Dabrowka
John Lofland
8. Teresa Goller
9. Linda Connelly
10. Bradley Malone
Peggy Ruff
12. Maureen Ruski
13. Peggy Druessel
14. June Coleman
David Mahr
16. Nancy Beede
20. Debbie Moster
21. Howard Beede
22. David Carpenter
Jake Sawyer
Robby Moore
25. Patrick Carter
26. Jodi Baldwin
27. Laurel Lorey
28. Ramona Borders
Chase Leman
30. Valerie Janvrin

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!

1. Michael & Judy Koyak
8. Ned & Sandy Cummings
Craig & Pam Mueller
11. Tom & Barbara Wildy
24. Joe & Carol Robertson
25. Mark & Pat Jaberg
30. Gary & Judy Sawyer



FIRST SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

AUGUST 2

LITURGIST: Darla Weltmer
FLOWERS: Don & Stacy Carter
COFFEE:

USHERS/GREETER: Howard Beede, Dave Gant, Sandi Pleasants, Martha Crookshank

AUGUST 9

LITURGIST: Judi Carpenter
FLOWERS: Tom & Paula Cordts
COFFEE:
USHERS/GREETER: Ted & Darby Mitchell, Howard Beede, Don Wenneker

AUGUST 16

LITURGIST: Bonnie Ruecker
FLOWERS: Peggy Druessel
COFFEE:
USHERS/GREETER: Howard Beede, Chuck Zweck, Sharon Burbes, Marilee Gordon

AUGUST 23

LITURGIST: Chuck Zweck
FLOWERS: Marylin Cushing
COFFEE:
USHERS/GREETER: Jim & Jodi Baldwin, Pat & Margie Malone

AUGUST 30

LITURGIST: Paul DeBruine
FLOWERS: Don & Dee Wenneker
COFFEE:
USHERS/GREETER: Frank & Shelly Smith, Ellen Starace, Darla Weltmer

SECOND SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

AUGUST 2

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

AUGUST 9

USHER/GREETER: Wes Pietsch
REFRESHMENTS: Wes Pietsch

AUGUST 16

USHER/GREETER: Betty Wheatley
REFRESHMENTS: Betty Wheatley

AUGUST 23

USHER/GREETER: Sandy Harmison
REFRESHMENTS: Sandy Harmison

AUGUST 30

USHER/GREETER: Mark & Jeanette Flenner
REFRESHMENTS: Mark & Jeanette Flenner



