

Congregational Comments

Vol. 19 No 12: December 2014

Pastor: Rev. Dave Taylor

Prayer Chain: Marsha Mower: 875-0733

Email: m.mower@sbcglobal.net

Playmates Preschool:

Director, Amy Miller

Newsletter Editor: Bill Huebner

Telephone: 876-1446 Cell: 855-7677

Email: wshuebner.editor@prodigy.net

Church Contact Information:

3465 N. MacArthur Rd.

Decatur, IL 62526

Telephone: 877-2216 Fax: 877-9665

Email: firstchurchdecatur@sbcglobal.net

Website: www.firstchurchdecatur.com

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



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



Pastor Dave Taylor

FROM THE PASTOR

THE BEST GIFT

*For God so loved the world that
He gave His only begotten Son
That whosoever believes in Him,
Shall not perish but have eternal
life.* John 3:16

“What makes Christmas special? I asked a group young children. “Jesus!” shouted some of them while others said “Presents!” For many of us, presents are an important part of Christmas. We spend great amounts of energy, time and money at Wal-Mart and the mall making sure we have the right presents for our loved ones. “For God so loved...that He gave...” God gives us the greatest gift in Jesus Christ our Savior. Yet God’s present to us is the gift of *presence* – “to be with us.” Think back to the special times in your life, they were created when people shared their love and presence with each other.

The gifts on this list cost almost no money, but they have GREAT value. When we give these gifts, we are giving a priceless gift - ourselves.

The gift of **listening** – One of the greatest things we can do for another person is to listen without interrupting, daydreaming or thinking about our next leap into the conversation.

The gift of **showing affection** – Demonstrate the love we feel inside with hugs, kisses, gentle squeezes of the hand, pats on the back, smiles.

The gift of **laughter** – Everyone loves to laugh. Try to see the humor in day-to-day living. Develop the ability to laugh at ourselves.

The gift of **cheerfulness** – This means no complaining, no feeling sorry for ourselves, no nasty comments, no screaming. Our gift of cheerfulness will be precious for everyone, including ourselves.

The gift of **doing a favor** – Help with the dishes, type a letter, run an errand.

The gift of a **game** – Most people have at least one game they like to play...softball, cards, chess, checkers. Offer to play

your loved one's favorite game in a caring spirit. We're winners whenever we share a positive experience.

The gift of **contact** – Write notes or send a card as simple as “thinking of you today.” Make phone calls, email or text if someone is having an especially trying time. Reach out with support.

The gift of **prayer** – The hidden gift. Lift up family, friends, yourself - even enemies to God in prayer. Our prayers find their answer in God's faithful love.

This Christmas season – discover again God's present to you—Jesus Christ the Savior! God always welcomes you no matter what has happened in the past. God sent Jesus so you would know: God loves YOU and all the people of the world. Come check us out at First Congregational UCC!!

*May you welcome anew
the one born in a humble manger,
Born not to keep us as we are
but born to change us,
To broaden our faith, increase our vision,
embolden our courage, to stretch our hope,
That the lion and lamb find a place together,
That there is a place at the table for everyone,
That deserts bloom with flowers.
When the promise seems beyond us,
You, O God, are born in us.
Be born in us today.*

A merry and blessed Christmas to all!

Pastor Dave

No matter who you are - or where you are on life's journey - you are welcome here at First Congregational United Church of Christ!

Come experience God's love and light every Sunday in worship **9 am** Traditional and **11 am** Contemporary. Our Sunday School is first service. Come join us at **10 am** in the Fellowship Hall for delicious refreshments and great fellowship! During this time check out one of 2 Bible Study groups.

Check out our great children's and youth **LOGOS** program on **Wednesdays** 4:45-7:15 pm.

Please check the Special Services listing in this newsletter.
Join us in worship & fellowship during this sacred season of hope and new life and bring a friend!

SPECIAL DECEMBER Services and Events

Dec. 6 Progressive Dinner

Dec. 7 Holy Communion – 10 AM Annual Mtg Votes on 2015 slate of ministry members and budget. Installation of ministry members.

Dec. 14 9:00 am Children's Christmas Program.

This Sunday during worship, come experience the spirit of Christmas through **our wonderful Children's Christmas Program**. Come join us for a wonderful service as we prepare for Christ's coming!

Dec. 14 Christmas Caroling

We'll share the spirit of Christmas and love with homebound members through song, spirit and presence. This is a double blessing - warming the hearts of others as well as your heart too. Come join us

Dec. 21 9:00 am and 11:00 am

This Sunday will be our amazing **Christmas Music Services**.

9:00 am will feature inspiring selections by our Adult Choir and Handbell Choir and our singing Christmas Carols.

11:00 am We'll have our Contemporary Worship Service featuring the Praise Band and message and music of Advent and Christmas.

Come be lifted up through the

many wonderful expressions of spirit and joy in song and music this Christmas!

Dec. 24 7 pm Christmas Eve

This special service is for everyone. We'll sing favorite carols and share in lighting candles, hear the Christmas story, share Christ's Communion and there'll be something for the children. Join us as we celebrate the birth of the Christ child whose Spirit continues to transform us today. **Everyone is welcome!!!**

Join us this Sacred Season & invite a friend!

MERRY CHRISTMAS

From Pastor Dave and Bobbie

Bobbie, and I want to thank each of you for the opportunity to share our lives together in ministry and friendship. We especially thank you for the kindness you have shared with us this past year. We wish you a blessed Christmas season and a happy and healthy New Year!!!

Important Announcements

On Oct 19th, Kathryn Elizabeth Stickney became the newest baptized member of First Congregational United Church of Christ. Kathryn's parents are Andy and Stacey (Baker) Stickney and Alyssa Baker was her Godparent. Kathryn's grandparents are Mike Stickney and Linda Lorenz – and Gary and Kathy Ann Baker. We pray God's blessing be with Kathryn and her parents, godparent and grandparents - filling them all with compassion, wisdom, joy, peace, health, hope and love now and always.



Pastor Dave and
Kathryn Elizabeth
Stickney

“On Nov 2nd we welcomed Brandon Janvrin, Alex and Angie Miller and their children, Aiden and Miranda Miller, Brian and Jan Traugher, and Mark and Susan Schleeter, as the newest members of First Congregational United Church of Christ. We give thanks to God for their becoming a part of our church family. May God bless us as we go forward sharing in Christ's ministry together.”

Giving Envelopes

“Why am I getting these?” “I give electronically, I don't need these.” “What a waste of postage.” These are phrases heard when the following year's giving envelopes arrive in the mail. Actually, it is not a waste of postage. If we were to mail each packet individually, it would be \$2.24 cents each. The cheapest postage rate is for a mailing of 200 pieces and we don't have near that many. The next cheapest rate we are able to take advantage of is 50 lbs. and it involves mailing to just about everyone. So, if you give electronically, or once a year, or quarterly, and have no need for a packet, just bring it back to the church and we can use the contents as pew envelopes. Or another idea – put a dollar or loose change in them every so often. As always, thank you for your donations to First Congregational United Church of Christ in Decatur.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Stewardship Update from the Consecration Sunday Program: We have heard from 82 people this year and they have committed \$156,980 for Current Expenses and \$16,903 for Outreach. We anticipate receiving 14 more commitments, for approximately \$12,000. This is a total increase over 2014 of approximately \$29,000. Thank you to everyone for your commitment of faith to First Church and its ministry.

Custodial Reminder: There is a notebook in the "custodian" mail box outside the main office to utilize for any "notes" to the custodian, Scott. (Please keep in mind, this is only a 15-hours-a-week job!)

THANK YOU to everyone who helped make our 14th Annual LOGOS Trunk or Treat event a success. The recipient of the coveted "trophy" is Bruce Whitney - congrats!

THANK YOU to those who attended our 12th Annual LOGOS Veterans Night. We appreciate you sharing yourselves with us.

ANNUAL MEETING will be held in the sanctuary Sunday, December 7, 2014 at 10:00 a.m., for the purpose of: approving the minutes of the February 16, 2014 Special Called meeting; financial update and stewardship campaign report; presentation and approval of the 2015 budget; installation of officers and ministry members for 2015; introduction of the new president; and any other business to come before the congregation. Supporting materials will be available to the congregation in the narthex by November 30.

IT'S NOT TOO EARLY TO SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR CHURCH-WIDE CHRISTMAS CAROLING. We will meet in Fellowship Hall at 12:30 on Sunday, December 14 and visit those in our church family who are unable to get out for the holidays and spread a little holiday cheer. Trust me - this will be a very worthwhile investment of your time! Any questions, see Marsha Mower.

Adult Program News

Progressive Dinner

Please join us December 6 at 5:00 for the annual Progressive Dinner. We will begin the evening at the home of Chris and Amy Leman, 941 Schroll Drive in Forsyth, with hearty appetizers and a carving station. We will end our evening with desserts at Alice and Bill Huebner's home, 3776 Ashley Ct., Decatur. We are encouraging you to meet at the church and carpool for the evening, in order to have adequate parking. To sign up, call the church office. You will be asked to bring either an appetizer or dessert.

Thanksgiving Dinner

It may have been cold outside, but there was a lot of warmth inside at our church family Thanksgiving dinner. Sixty-five members of our church family gathered together, braving cold weather and an early dusting of snow to share in our annual meal. We had plenty of tasty food and lots of fellowship. **Texas Roadhouse** kindly donated rolls and cinnamon butter.

Our ministry would like to extend a special thanks to all of you who jumped in and helped out. From making coffee, clearing tables, washing dishes, putting away tables and chairs, and laundering tablecloths your help is so appreciated. You made a big undertaking so much easier.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWS AND THANK YOU'S

The Christmas Pageant entitled “**Sleepover at the Stable**” will be held during 1st service on **December 14th**. Thank you to **Mindy Bunselmeyer** for her time and talent with our young children. See you there, for what will surely be a treat.

Advent Calendars will be given out to the Children on the first Sunday of Advent, Nov. 30th, to take home. If your child/children will not be in church that Sunday please contact Mindy Bunselmeyer to get them one.

All children attending the **Christmas Eve Service** will receive a special gift. Please let a Children's Ministry member know if your child/children will not be there and we will get them one early.

THANK YOU to Stacy Carter for seeing a special opportunity for our church! Stacy works as the Librarian at the Decatur Correctional Center and she was asked if she knew of a church that might need children sizes of Choir robes! God is good! How fortunate that we just happen to have a brand new choir of children waiting to wear these! Thank you, **Debbie Moster**, for getting them steamed and pressed in time for the November performance and to **Sue Bunselmeyer** and **Helen Johnson** for getting some of these hemmed.

THANK YOU to the congregation members that made special donations for the Summer Camp Scholarships. \$150 will be added to the \$199 we already had.

THANK YOU to Bill and Alice Huebner for donating 3 new toys for the small Sunday school room used during Fellowship hour by many children! If anyone else would like to make a donation of new toys, it would be appreciated!

THANK YOU to the congregation for donations of small toys and gifts for the **Christmas Shoe Boxes!** Nov. 2nd there were 30 shoe-boxes assembled and several generous members assembled another 26, bringing our church total to 56! Thank you **Sue Bunselmeyer** for getting those delivered for us and thank you **Chuck Zweck** for helping us get the postage labels complete that will tell us where the boxes travel!

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Women's Fellowship will meet on Friday, December 12th at 1:00 P.M. in Fellowship Hall. All attending are asked to bring 3 dozen cookies. 1 dozen will be used for our enjoyment and then your empty tin can take a dozen or 2 home...depending on how many cookies are brought that day.

AND it has been suggested you bring along the recipe to share as I know some will want that special cookie you bring.

Give us some idea by Sunday Dec. 7th how many plan to attend. Questions? Call Darla 877-7008 - SEE YOU THERE!

MITTEN TREE

Watch for the Christmas tree in Fellowship Hall. Once again it will ready to be dressed in new mittens, hats, gloves, and scarves for boys, girls, men and women. These warm winter offerings will be given to DOVE to include in community Christmas baskets. The last day to dress the tree with your gifts is Sunday, December 14. Thank you from Outreach Ministry.

THINKING AHEAD - - -

This message is a reminder to all of you who claim charitable deductions on your income tax. The last deposit for the year will be made on Monday, December 29. All contributions mailed or hand delivered need to be in the office by Tuesday, December 23. The Sunday collection of December 28 will be counted and banked on Monday, December 29, but mail delivery does not arrive until after that deposit has been made.

So please plan ahead – if you are not going to be in church on December 28, please mail or bring your last contribution of the year in plenty of time. If you are considering a contribution being sent from a financial institution in your name, please do it in **early December**.

Thank you for your contributions to First Congregational United Church of Christ.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	1	2 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	3 4:45-7:15 7:30 Adu
7 10:00 Annual Meeting Pastoral Card Sales	8 5:30 Admin Meeting 6:00 Worship/Music 7:00 Property	9 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	10 4:45-7:15 7:30 Adu
14 Christmas Children's Program 12:30-5:00pm Christmas Caroling	15 7:00 Church Council	16 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	17 7:30 Adu
21 Christmas Music Sunday Youth Annual Christmas Cookie Walk	22	23 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	24 7:00 PM Christmas Service
28 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	29	30 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	31

	Thu	Fri	Sat
5 LOGOS Alt Choir	4 5:45 First Ringers	5	6 5:00 Progressive Dinner
5 LOGOS Alt Choir	11 5:45 First Ringers	12	13
Alt Choir	18 5:45 First Ringers	19	20
as Eve	25 	26	27
			

Poinsettias

Christmas is just around the corner and it is time once again to order poinsettias for the altar. Orders will be taken through Dec 8th at a cost of \$11.50 each. Please fill out the form in the church bulletin or call the church office to place your order. In lieu of flowers you may donate to the Scholarship Fund or the Memorial Fund. Please be sure to note if you want your donation in honor or in memory of a loved one when you order. You may pick up your Poinsettia after the Christmas Eve service



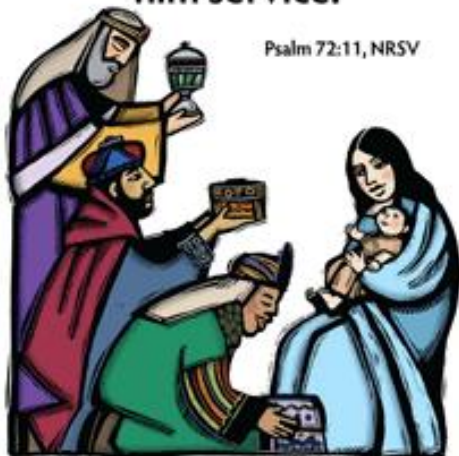
Our children's choir
The robes were a little big, but they were great



Shirley Zimmerman and Madeline Mitchell donated 42 Christmas stockings to Dove, Inc.

May all kings
fall down before him,
all nations give
him service.

Psalms 72:11, NRSV



Kroger News by Jeanette Flenner

This week we received a rebate check from Kroger for \$161.85. Our year to date total is \$949.39. Thanks for using your Kroger gift cards to benefit the church. Cards are available during the week in the church office. Every card is worth \$20.



OCTOBER 2014 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>Oct 14</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$15,672.57	\$156,725.70
Budget Expense	\$17,414.05	\$174,140.50
Income	\$15,112.01	\$161,073.28
Expenses	\$12,785.35	\$165,258.05

LOGOS THEMES 2014-2015

SEPTEMBER

- 7 - Rally Day
10 - Sundae Wednesday
6:00 staff & families
17 - Welcome to LOGOS
24 - Joint Event (4:30-7:00)
at Rock Springs
(Food Challenge)

SEPTEMBER 2014						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

OCTOBER 2014

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

OCTOBER

- 1 - Guten Tag
8 - Take Me Out to the
Ballgame
15 - Parlez-vous Francais?
22 - NO LOGOS
29 - Trunk or Treat

NOVEMBER

- 5 - NASCAR Night
12 - Honoring Our Veterans
19 - Thankful Hearts
26 - NO LOGOS

NOVEMBER 2014						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

DECEMBER 2014

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

DECEMBER

- 3 - Crazy Hats
10 - Happy Birthday Jesus
17 - Christmas Pageant
24 - NO LOGOS
31 - NO LOGOS

JANUARY

- 7 - LOGOS (Staff?)
14 - Opposites
21 - Board Games
28 - Super Bowl

JANUARY 2015						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

FEBRUARY 2015

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

FEBRUARY

- 4 - Animal Friends
11 - NO LOGOS
18 - Ash Wednesday
25 - Hooray for Hollywood

MARCH

- 4 - Colors of the Rainbow
11 - Spuds 'n Suds
18 - NO LOGOS
25 - March Madness

MARCH 2015						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

APRIL 2015

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

APRIL

- 1 - Autograph T's
8 - FINAL Banquet

TENTATIVE

Butter Braid/Show Me Dough Fundraiser
October 8 - November 12
(delivery 11/24 - pick-up 5:30-6:15pm)

LOGOS meets 4:45 - 7:15pm, unless otherwise noted.

Youth Activities

Mark your calendars now for the months of January and February for two great Youth events.

Senior Dinner

Mark your calendars for Saturday, January 10, 2015. Dinner will be served at 5:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall for those who are in the 'Over 60' crowd. This will be our fifth **'Celebrate Our Seniors Dinner'** and will include beautiful table settings, wonderful service by our youth, and music from the '40s, '50s and '60s. The Youth look forward to this event, and hope that all the seniors due to.

Sweetheart Dinner

Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 14, 2015, the Youth will be hosting the Annual Sweetheart Dinner at 6:00 p.m. This event, held in Fellowship Hall, is a pasta dinner and silent auction for families. We hope to see you and your family and friends for an evening full of fun and fellowship. All proceeds will be used for the 2015 Youth Mission Trip to Toronto, and Dallas.

Youth Annual Christmas Cookie Walk

Just in time for the Christmas guests; the **Annual Youth Cookie Walk** is set for December 21st in the fellowship hall between services. Come help the youth earn money toward the 2015 Youth Mission Trip and stock up on the most delicious goodies at the same time.

The youth are also looking for volunteers to help by donating as many baked goods as you would like. This is a very big event that everyone enjoys. Please let any Youth or Youth Ministry member know what you will be bringing. Thank you for your support.



We are always excited at Playmates that we have the opportunity to have Pastor Dave have chapel with our classes every month. This picture is from our November chapel where we talked about being thankful and remembering to say “thank you.”

I would like to thank everyone for donating to our Christmas shop. The children enjoy being able to shop for their families and it gives them an opportunity to learn about giving. The kids also get another opportunity to give as we collect donations for New Life Pregnancy Center on the day of our Christmas program. You can always find us on Facebook and see what’s happening.

Have a blessed Christmas!

Amy Miller



“We celebrate the marriage of Rebecca George and Aaron Taylor – united in marriage Nov. 8, 2014. We offer our best wishes for many happy and loving years together in their marriage. May God continue to bless them this day and through out their lives.”

In Christ’s Spirit,
Pastor Dave Taylor



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

2. Sheila Mannweiler
3. Pamela Tucker
6. Judy Sawyer
7. Jeffrey Beck
Kelly Cantrell
Sandy Cummings
Jennie Wernecke
9. Mary Lou Phipps
- 13 Marylin Cushing
Lynn Weltmer
15. Sally Lauer
Aaron Taylor
16. Marilee Gordon
23. Marie Anna Poland
24. Janet Brownfield
29. Clinton Whitrock
30. Sandy Harmison
31. Robert Bunselmeyer
Joe Robertson

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!*

11. Keith & Paula Carmichael
17. Wallace & Tonita Reifsteck
21. Dick & Gloria Cheatham
22. Gary & Patricia Weiss
31. Clinton & Ellen Whitrock



FIRST SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

DECEMBER 7

LITURGIST: Carol Robertson

FLOWERS: Randy & Mark Beck

COFFEE:

USHERS/GREETER: Marilee
Gordon, Dave Carpenter, Dave &
Marlene Gant

DECEMBER 14

LITURGIST: Amy Leman

FLOWERS: Bill & Alice Huebner

COFFEE:

USHERS/GREETER: Jim & Jodi
Baldwin, Joe & Carol Robertson

DECEMBER 21

LITURGIST: Mindy Bunselmeyer

FLOWERS: Poinsettias

COFFEE:

USHERS/GREETER: Chuck
Zweck, Sheila Mannweiler, Pat &
Margie Malone

DECEMBER 24

LITURGIST: Bobbie Taylor

FLOWERS: Poinsettias

COFFEE:

USHERS/GREETER: The
Bunselmeyer Family

DECEMBER 28

LITURGIST: Darla Weltmer

FLOWERS: Poinsettias

COFFEE:

USHERS/GREETER: Frank &
Shelly Smith, Allen & Ann Gerhold

SECOND SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

DECEMBER 7

USHER/GREETER: Sandy
Harmison

REFRESHMENTS: Sandy
Harmison

DECEMBER 14

USHER/GREETER: Wes
Pietsch

REFRESHMENTS: Wes Pietsch

DECEMBER 21

USHER/GREETER: Bruce &
Debbie Whitney

REFRESHMENTS: Bruce &
Debbie Whitney

DECEMBER 28

USHER/GREETER: Joe Moretti/
Maureen Ruski

REFRESHMENTS: Joe Moretti/
Maureen Ruski



