

# Congregational Comments

Vol. 21 No 12: December 2016

**Pastor:** Rev. Jan Johnson: 309-267-3260

Email: [RevJanUCC@sbcglobal.net](mailto:RevJanUCC@sbcglobal.net)

**Prayer Chain:** Marsha Mower: 412-8797

Email: [m.mower@sbcglobal.net](mailto:m.mower@sbcglobal.net)

**Playmates Preschool:**

Interim Director: Alfredo Tribout

**Newsletter Editor:** Bill Huebner

Telephone: 876-1446 Cell: 855-7677

Email: [wshuebner.editor@prodigy.net](mailto:wshuebner.editor@prodigy.net)

## Church Contact Information:

3465 N. MacArthur Rd.

Decatur, IL 62526

Telephone: 877-2216

Email: [firstchurchdecatur@sbcglobal.net](mailto:firstchurchdecatur@sbcglobal.net)

Website: [www.firstchurchdecatur.com](http://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

11:15-11:40 am Sunday School



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



## Pastor Jan Johnson

### FROM THE PASTOR

Year after year we celebrate Thanksgiving in our family. In the early days we would gather at my grandparents home and share our family special foods: Chicken and Dumplings and Cannederli, glazed carrots and creamed peas (ugh), mashed potatoes and gravy. Pumpkin Pie and warm Cinnamon coffeecake. I was young enough to need to sit on huge phonebooks – 2 of them. Great Grandma Nona and Grandpa Tullio would speak in Italian. My dad and uncle would translate. My Grandma Dorothy and Great Grandma Mayme would roll their eyes. It was great! At least until Great Grandma Mayme died.

Our family changed. Three years later my brother was born and Grandpa Tullio died and our family changed again. Three years later my second brother was born and Great Grandma Nona died and our family changed again. We still gathered as family but now there was a deaf 3 year old and a high chair. Our three elders had gone, new small children arrived. The food was the same and the traditions were passed on. But we learned something.

As a family we learned that we have much to be thankful for.....people who love one another (if rather loudly in Italian sometimes). We have foods that give the holiday gathering meaning. We have one another in times of love and joy, birth and death, times of struggle and times of plenty. In other words, we are Family.

Christ calls us together as His Family of faith and on those special holy days when we gather together at table or at Table, we remember and share love and joy, birth and death, times of struggle and times of plenty as brothers and sisters in Christ, children of God.

As each of you sit down to enjoy food and fellowship during this holiday season, remember what life as a Family of faith has taught us: lighten the darkness in this world, make rough paths smooth, love one another as Christ has loved us and our neighbor as ourselves, serve others and share Christ with the world.

Have a Blessed Advent Journey and a Wonderful Christmas Celebration!

Jan

---

Thank you to all who shared their faith through the Advent Devotional Booklet in preparation and in celebration of Christ's coming this year! --Rev. Jan

---

**NEW OFFICE HOURS:** Beginning November 21 through the end of the year, the church office will be open from 8:00 - noon, Monday through Thursday. Our Office Manager, Peggy, will be having back surgery on November 22. She hopes to return December 5, but may not be working full days. In her absence, Chuck Zweck has agreed to cover during the office hours.

---

## **Christmas Pageant Practice**

- Christmas Pageant Practice 11/9, 4:45-5:15 p.m.
- Christmas Pageant Practice 11/13, 10:05 a.m.
- Christmas Pageant Practice 11/16, 5:15-5:45 p.m.
- Christmas Pageant Practice 11/20, 10:05 a.m.
- Christmas Pageant Practice 11/27, 10:05 a.m.
- Christmas Pageant Practice 11/30, 5:15-5:45 p.m.
- Christmas Pageant Practice 12/4, 10:05 a.m.
- Christmas Pageant Practice 12/7, 5:15-5:45 p.m.
- Christmas Pageant Practice (Dress rehearsal) 12/10, 3:30 p.m.

Christmas Program 2016 Sunday, December 11, 2016 during the 9:00 a.m. worship service

---

## **Kroger Cards**

Remember that we all need to be sure that we are still getting credit for our purchases. When you shop at Kroger, the bottom of your ticket should say something about supporting First Congregational UCC. If it doesn't, you must call the 800 number on your card and tell them that you want to be sure your expenditure is being credited to us. Our tax id number is 12-1957221. Sometimes they ask for it.

# ORDER YOUR POINSETTIAS



Complete this form and remit with payment in the offering plate or to the church office. **THE DEADLINE TO ORDER IS DECEMBER 6<sup>th</sup>.** Please pick up your poinsettias after Christmas Eve or Christmas Day Service!

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to order # \_\_\_\_\_ poinsettia/poinsettias @ \$12.50/ea.

\_\_\_\_\_ In lieu of flowers, I would like my donation made to the Memorial Fund.

\_\_\_\_\_ In lieu of flowers, I would like my donation made to the Scholarship Fund.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

or

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions, please call Shirley Kuhn at 468-2052 or Peggy in the church office 877-2216.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION AND DATES**

Stewardship Update from the Consecration Sunday Program: We have received 71 cards back this year and they have committed \$171,142 for Current Expenses and \$22,091 for Outreach. 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!)

ANNUAL MEETING will be held in the sanctuary Sunday, December 4, 2016 at 10:00 a.m., for the purpose of: approving the minutes of the December 6, 2016 Annual Meeting and of the October 16, 2016 Special Congregational Meeting; approving the new Endowment Foundation director; financial update and stewardship campaign report; presentation and approval of the 2016 budget; election and installation of officers and ministry team co-leaders for 2017; and any other business to come before the congregation. Supporting materials will be available to the congregation in the narthex by November 27th.

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 11 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.

ANNUAL REPORTS for 2016 are due no later than January 7, 2017 for pastor, officers, ministries, committees and other organizations. Please get these written and sent to the church office and Marsha Mower as soon as possible. Thanks.

## Youth Annual Christmas Cookie Walk

Just in time for your Christmas guests...the Annual Youth Cookie Walk will be between services on December 18<sup>th</sup> in Fellowship Hall. Come stock up on delicious goodies and help the Youth earn money for the Youth Activity Fund 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.



© Can Stock Photo



# OPERATION CHRISTMAS SHOEBOXES

THANK YOU to everyone who contributed to the Operation Christmas Child Shoe Box project! We have a total of 48 shoe boxes that were taken to Sharon United Methodist Church for distribution worldwide! The Logos youth, Christina, James, and Grace assembled 30 of the boxes for teen boys and girls with the help of your donations. It seemed to work well providing you with a suggested item list. Also, Chuck Zweck made 2 boxes on his own and the Bunselmeyer/Leman families made 16 boxes for younger children with toys and necessities chosen by Gehrig, Emery, Chase and Quinn. Also, thank you for the monetary donations for shipping! Children's Ministry felt that this project is worthwhile enough for us to budget for the postage cost next year. Bringing Christmas to children who may not have much, is the most vital form of living out our Christianity that we can share with the children of our congregation!



## **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

The Women's Fellowship will hold their Annual Christmas Tea on Friday, December 16th 1:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. For those wishing to do so, please bring along 3 dozen of your favorite Christmas Cookies ...1 dozen to share and then you may select 2 dozen of the other cookies to take home with you. This is not required but fun to sample everyone's goodies and then have some to eat at home. If you don't want to do this, just bring a dozen to share with us. Invite your friends to attend also. The more the merrier. Watch the Sunday bulletin for further details BUT save the date on your calendars NOW!

## **THANK YOU**

Thank you to all who turned out for Pastoral Care Ministry's card-making day on Saturday, October 22. These included Judi Carpenter, Shelly Smith, Sheila Mannweiler, Betty Cummings, Mary Beck, Alice Huebner, and Jodi Baldwin. Others who were not able to attend, including Bette Fankhouser and Sue Bunselmeyer, made cards at home. Emphasis was on get well, sympathy, and anniversary cards but a variety of cards were made. The next card-making day will be sometime after the holidays.

## **Decatur Area Church Women United**

Decatur Area Church Women United will hold their Annual Christmas Luncheon on Monday December 12th at Grace United Methodist Church, 901 N. Main St. at 12:00 noon. Luncheon will be donation and all are welcome to attend but I do need to have a reservation for you. Please contact Darla Weltmer 877-7008 by Friday 9th if you would like to attend.





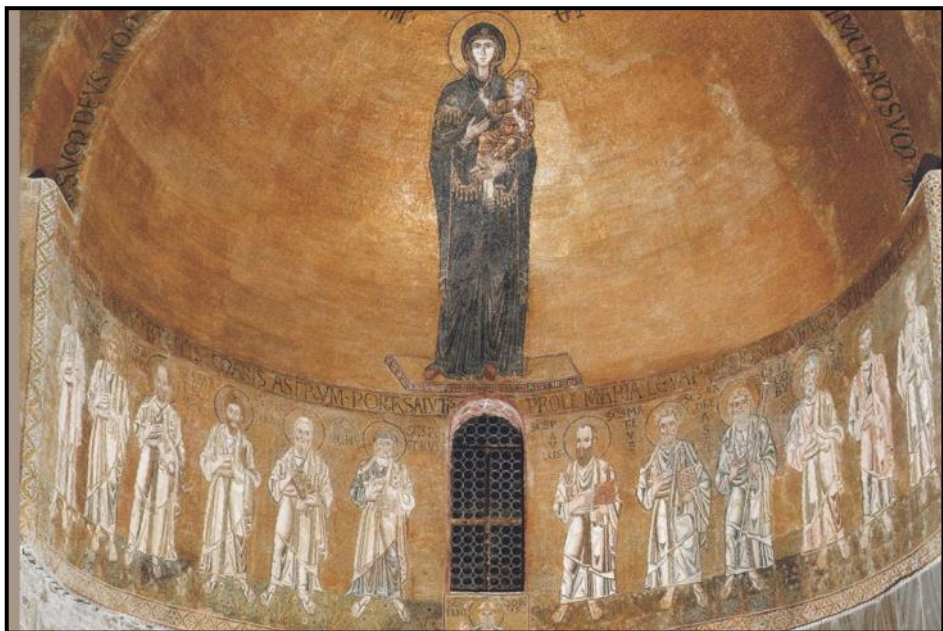
Our very own ***Devon Moretti*** and her classmates, Nicolette Murphy, and Dean Ziemer. presented *"Promoting Bone Health"* for women of all ages on Friday, November 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

This helped these people meet a requirement while giving women very important information on staying healthy.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
<p><b>9:00 Traditional</b>  <b>10:00 Fellowship</b>  <b>Hour</b>  <b>11:00</b>  <b>Contemporary</b></p>			
<p><b>4</b>  <b>10:00 Annual</b>  <b>Congregational</b>  <b>Meeting</b>  <b>10:05 Pageant</b>  <b>Practice</b></p>	<p><b>5</b>  <b>6:30-8:00</b>  <b>12 Step Group</b></p>	<p><b>6</b>  <b>1:00 God's Busy</b>  <b>Hands</b>  <b>7:00 AA: Al-anon</b>  <b>8:00 AA</b></p>	<p><b>7</b>  <b>4:15-6:45</b>  <b>5:45-6:15</b>  <b>Pageant</b>    <b>7:30 Cho</b></p>
<p><b>11</b>  <b>9:00 Children's</b>  <b>Christmas</b>  <b>Pageant</b>  <b>12:30—5:00</b>  <b>Caroling</b></p>	<p><b>12</b>  <b>5:30 Admin</b>    <b>6:30-8:00</b>  <b>12 Step Group</b></p>	<p><b>13</b>  <b>1:00 God's Busy</b>  <b>Hands</b>  <b>7:00 AA: Al-anon</b>  <b>8:00 AA</b></p>	<p><b>14</b>    <b>7:00 Cho</b></p>
<p><b>18</b>  <b>Music Sunday</b>  <b>Program</b>  <b>10:00 Cookie</b>  <b>Walk</b>  <b>12:00 Grief</b>  <b>Memorial Group</b></p>	<p><b>19</b>  <b>5:30 Church</b>  <b>Council</b>    <b>6:30-8:00</b>  <b>12 Step Group</b></p>	<p><b>20</b>  <b>1:00 God's Busy</b>  <b>Hands</b>  <b>7:00 AA: Al-anon</b>  <b>8:00 AA</b></p>	<p><b>21</b>    <b>7:00 Cho</b></p>
<p><b>25</b>    <b>10:00 Christmas</b>  <b>Worship Service</b></p>	<p><b>26</b>  <b>6:30-8:00</b>  <b>12 Step Group</b></p>	<p><b>27</b>    <b>7:00 AA: Al-anon</b>  <b>8:00 AA</b></p>	<p><b>28</b></p>

	<b>Thu</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sat</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> <b>6:00-8:30 MCYP</b>	<b>3</b> <b>8:00-11:00 AA</b>
<b>S LOGOS</b> <b>Practice</b> <b>ir</b>	<b>8</b> <b>5:45 First Ringers</b>	<b>9</b> <b>6:00-8:30 MCYP</b>	<b>10</b> <b>8:00-11:00 AA</b> <b>3:30 Pageant Dress Rehearsal</b>
<b>ir</b>	<b>15</b> <b>1:15 Book Club</b> <b>5:45 First Ringers</b>	<b>16</b> <b>6:00-8:30 MCYP</b> <b>6:30-8:30 PFLAB</b>	<b>17</b> <b>8:00-11:00 AA</b>
<b>ir</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> <b>6:00-8:30 MCYP</b>	<b>24</b> <b>8:00-11:00 AA</b> <b>7:00 Christmas Eve Service</b>
	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> <b>6:00-8:30 MCYP</b>	<b>31</b> <b>8:00-11:00 AA</b>



**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From your Newsletter Editor**



FOR GOD THAT SENDS HIS ONLY  
BORN SON INTO THE WORLD  
WHO HAS COME TO SAVE  
THE WORLD FROM SIN  
AND TO BRING US  
EVERLASTING LIFE  
THAT BELIEVERS  
IN HIM SHALL  
NOT PERISH  
BUT HAVE  
EVERLASTING LIFE

Harold H. H. H.

John 3:16

## Playmates News

We've been very busy this fall. We've taken trips to Black Bart's Pumpkin Patch and Decatur Fire Station #1. Pastor Jan has talked to us about working together and being thankful at Chapel Time. In addition to all of our usual learning activities, we're getting ready for our Taste of Thanksgiving.

Kim Colbert has returned as the aide in Nanette Krueger's 4-year old class, replacing Allie Russell. The Russell family welcomed their son, Harrison Andrew, on November 11. We wish God's blessings on their family and thank Allie for all of her dedicated work and enthusiastic support of Playmates.

We're looking forward to Christmas. To a three or four year old, it seems as though it will never get here. For the teachers, it will be here in the blink of an eye. We will be practicing for our Christmas program which will be December 22. Christmas break starts after that.

From the staff and children of Playmates Preschool,

### "Merry Christmas!"



# PROGRESSIVE DINNER

All are invited to attend Progressive Dinner on Saturday, December 10. We will begin with appetizers at the home of Don and Stacey Carter at 6:30 that evening and follow with dessert at a yet to be determined location. If you can, please bring a favorite dish to share. To help us plan ahead, and to ensure that we don't have too much of one course and not enough of the other, please RSVP to Chris Leman at [chris.leman@fbfm.org](mailto:chris.leman@fbfm.org) or at 217.417.2218 to let us know how many will be attending and whether you wish to bring an appetizer or a dessert. Come enjoy this night of fun and fellowship!

## THANK YOU

On behalf of my family, I want to thank everyone for all their prayers for my dad, Gil Gleisner, during his illness. Thank you also to everyone who sent sympathy cards and for your kind words during this difficult time. They are very much appreciated. I am so blessed to be part of such a loving and caring church family! Thank you all again for your continued prayers for me and my family. Ellen Starace

## OCTOBER 2016 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>Oct 16</u>	<u>YTD</u>
<b>Budget Income</b>	\$18,431.00	\$184,310.00
<b>Budget Expense</b>	\$17,971.56	\$179,715.60
<b>Income</b>	\$14,062.45	\$172,557.16
<b>Expenses</b>	\$13,523.88	\$158,269.05

## THINKING AHEAD - - - (and it's really not that far away!)

1. If you are anticipating a contribution being sent from a financial institution for credit in 2016, please be sure this is done in early December. Contributions will be posted for the last time on Tuesday, December 27, and mail does not arrive that day until we are done posting. Also, if you are not going to be in church on December 25<sup>th</sup>, please bring or mail by Thurs., Dec. 22nd.
2. A couple weeks ago I told you of our decision to not mail (and maybe not order) any contribution envelopes for 2017. I've heard from some of you and it appears a booklet of envelopes is not needed by most people. There will be pew envelopes to use each Sunday and many of you have leftover envelopes from 2016 (and even earlier)! This will save the church money. If you decide you really need a "booklet," please call me (428-8468), send me an email ([MShppr1@gmail.com](mailto:MShppr1@gmail.com)), leave a note in my church mailbox, or see me in person. Thank you for your help.

## REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR AND VISIT MEMBERS WHO ARE IN ASSISTANT LIVING AND NURSING HOMES

### **Primrose Retirement Community**

Claude Young—Room 228

### **Keystone**

Carolyn Jones—Room 216

### **Vonderlieth Living Center, Mt. Pulaski, IL**

Alice Roach

### **Hickory Point Christian Village**

Al Wilson—Room 202

### **Everygreen Place**

Mary Lou Phipps— Room 333

### **Fair Haven Christian Home**

Lois Shelton—Room 113





## LOGOS

THANK-YOU to all who participated in the recent LOGOS Trunk or Treat event. A great time was had by all! Congratulations to Malone Moretti for winning the coveted "trunk" trophy this year.

THANK-YOU to those who attended our 14th Annual LOGOS Veterans Night. We appreciate you sharing yourselves with us.

### First Friday Dinner Out

First Friday Dinner Out for December will be at Local 101. As usual, we will meet at 6:00 on December 2. Please let me know if you are planning on attending by calling 877-4775 or emailing me at [sharmisob2002@yahoo.com](mailto:sharmisob2002@yahoo.com). See you there!

### OUR MITTEN TREE

Once again Outreach Ministry will sponsor a collection of new mittens, hats, gloves, and scarves for boys, girls, men and women. Donations may be placed on the Christmas tree in Fellowship Hall and will be given to DOVE to include in the Decatur community Christmas baskets. Thank you for your generosity this holiday season!





*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
8. Jeffrey Beck  
Kelly Cantrell  
Sandy Cummings  
Jennie Wernecke
9. Mary Lou Phipps
14. Marylin Cushing  
Caitlin Schrein  
Lynn Weltmer
15. Sally Lauer  
Melissa Flies  
Aaron Taylor
17. Marilee Gordon
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
18. Joe Seitz
21. Dick & Gloria Cheatham
22. Gary & Patricia Weiss
27. Carol Cooley
31. Clinton & Ellen Whitrock



**FIRST SERVICE**  
**VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE**

**DECEMBER 4**

**LITURGIST:** Amy Leman

**FLOWERS:** Randy & Mary Beck

**COFFEE:** Marlene Gant, Ev Kuhn

**USHERS/GREETER:** Marilee Gordon, Chuck Zweck, Ellen Starace, Mike Koyak

**DECEMBER 11**

**LITURGIST:** Melinda Redman

**FLOWERS:** Betty Wheatley

**COFFEE:** Todd & Gennie Wernecke

**USHERS/GREETER:** Sheila Witts-Mannweiler, Dave Carpenter, Ev Kuhn, Mike Loyak

**DECEMBER 18**

**LITURGIST:** Mindy Bunslemeyer

**FLOWERS:** Poinsettias

**COFFEE:** Frank & Shelly Smith

**USHERS/GREETER:** Jim & Jodi Baldwin, Tom & Paula Cordts

**DECEMBER 24**

**LITURGIST:** Chuck Zweck

**USHERS/GREETER:** The Bunselmeyer Family

**DECEMBER 25**

**LITURGIST:** Darla Wiltmer

**FLOWERS:** Poinsettias

**COFFEE:** No Coffee

**USHERS/GREETER:** No Ushers

**SECOND SERVICE**  
**VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE**

**DECEMBER 4**

**USHER/GREETER:** Mark/ Jeanette Flenner

**REFRESHMENTS:** Mark/ Jeanette Flenner

**DECEMBER 11**

**USHER/GREETER:** Leigh Myers

**REFRESHMENTS:** Angle Miller

**DECEMBER 18**

**USHER/GREETER:** Ruby Voyles/Shirley Zimmerman

**REFRESHMENTS:** Ruby Voyles/Shirley Zimmerman

**DECEMBER 25**

**USHER/GREETER:** Betty Wheatley

**REFRESHMENTS:** Betty Wheatley



