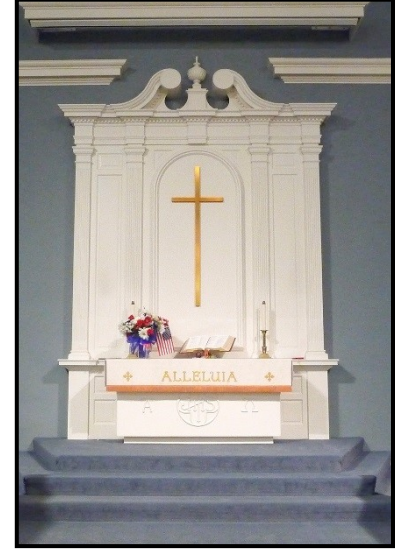


# Congregational Comments



**Vol. 24 No. 12: December 2019**

## Important Contacts in the Church

**Pastor:** Rev. Jan Johnson, 309-267-3260  
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**Prayer Chain:** Bette Fankhauser, 877-6723  
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**Playmates Preschool:** Interim Director: Alfreda Tribout  
**Newsletter Editor:** Bill Huebner, 876-1446, cell 855-7677  
 Email: [wshuebner.editor@prodigy.net](mailto:wshuebner.editor@prodigy.net)

## Church Contact Information:

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 Decatur, IL 62526  
 Telephone: 877-2216  
 Email: [firstchurchdecatur@sbcglobal.net](mailto:firstchurchdecatur@sbcglobal.net)  
 Website: [www.firstchurchdecatur.org](http://www.firstchurchdecatur.org)  
 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.

## **Inside this issue:**

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# A Note from Pastor Jan



I am unsure of how old this story is, if it is real or a collage of incidents that occurred over time. But I like the story as it seems to describe how the Church is seemingly against itself.

## *Shattered Communion*

*Clay pieces of a communion chalice lie scattered on the floor after a heated debate at a worldwide church gathering in 2004. A clay chalice has been shattered. A cup of forgiveness has been deliberately broken as an act of protest.*

*A bishop of the church gets on his knees and begins to pick up the pieces, and others join him.*

*The next day, on the projection screen at the front of the gathering is a photo of the fragments of the chalice wrapped in white linen. These shards represent a broken church. The image is all over denominational church news, but a professor of theology at the gathering is particularly distraught by it. She asks for the pieces of the broken chalice so she can restore it.*

*Someone brings a table, and someone else locates a first-aid kit with bandages. The camera woman finds some glue. Several people gather in the lobby, strangers to one another. Eventually, even the man who broke the chalice comes to help put the fragments back together.*

*The camera woman is an artist of bricolage and happens to have jewelry wire in her purse. She uses this to weave a basket that will hold the pieces together. The people begin to sort the shards, but soon find that several pieces are missing. The shattering is complete. The chalice meant to hold communion wine won't do so anymore.*

*Nonetheless, the chalice is repaired as far as possible, with bandages holding it together. A candle is placed in the bowl, and when lit, its light shines through the spaces.*

Think of a time of "darkness" when Christians have been fighting against one another. It feels that way in today's world! And every time we argue, disagree, fight, war against each other's beliefs, we create or add too the already existing darkness in the world. Advent is all about darkness giving way to the Light of Bethlehem and the Light of the World, Jesus. I truly believe that if, in those times we are pulling apart, we stopped and thought about Christ among us, God With Us, Immanuel, that we can, as people of faith, discover newness and cooperation and Love, Peace, Joy, and Hope! The reason we 'redo' Advent and Christmas each year is that we just haven't yet got it right. You and I are the 'bandages' of this world. We are woven together in Christ and by Christ and while we may not hold wine (that was for Jesus to do), but we can hold each other together and let the Light shine through us!

Let us journey to Bethlehem again this year beginning in Darkness and by holding each other up and hanging on to one another as sisters and brothers in faith, may the Light of Bethlehem shine brighter than ever allowing more and more people who are walking in darkness, see that great and holy Light!

Blessings for the Journey!

Jan

\*\*\*\*\*

I invite you to Soup and Bible Study for 4 weeks in Advent: Mondays at 11am for Soup and Study based on Charles Dicken's Classic, A Christmas Carol. We'll meet in Fellowship Hall. Books are in the office. We begin our journey together on December 2.

Jan



# THANKSGIVING DINNER



Our Thanksgiving/Veteran's Lunch was Once again a big success. We welcomed 19 guests from the Oasis this year and 70 First Congregational U.C.C. members. This success can only be achieved with the help of many!

**"Thank You"** to all who assisted in any way. A **special "Thanks"** to our youth for serving everyone and Praise Band for the wonderful music. Good Job!

Julie Keck and Shirley Zimmerman  
Adult Ministry Co-leaders

The Praise Band entertained before dinner



Some of our guests



The youth helped serve the dinner

Sharon Butler and Martha Crookshank



Photos by Dave Carpenter

December 2019

# **Annual Church Meeting Notice**

## **ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING DECEMBER 8, 2019 BETWEEN SERVICES**

**This is a call for the annual church meeting between services on December 8, 2019 to cover the following areas.**

- 1. Discuss the elevator funding.**
- 2. Financial update of the church**
- 3. Presentation and Approval of the Budget for 2020**
- 4. Election and Installation of Officers and Ministry Team Co-Leaders for 2020**
- 5. Update on the lawsuit against the church.**

**William Huebner, Church President**

# INFORMATION



*Formerly Foods Resource Bank*

After a later than usual harvest, the corn in our Growing Hope Globally plot has been harvested. It yielded 240 bushels per acre and was sold for \$4.05 before moisture discounts.

If anyone wants to contribute to the growing project input costs, you can still make a donation by using an envelope in the pew or by making a note on your offering accordingly.

Thank you again for your support of this outreach project. We are helping people in West Africa learn to feed themselves and their families and experience the dignity and pride of doing so.

## CARD MAKING

Pastoral Care recently hosted a card-making day on Saturday, November 2. Thank you to all the card-makers who showed up to help, including Bette Fankhauser, Judi Carpenter, Shelly Smith, Betty Cummings, Sue Bunselmeyer, Hayley Daniels, Ellen Starace, Alice Huebner, and Jodi Baldwin. Work focused on making birthday, sympathy, anniversary, and thinking-of-you cards. Another card-making day is tentatively planned for the spring.

## WOMENS FELLOWSHIP

WOMENS FELLOWSHIP will have a Christmas Tea and election of officers on Friday, December 13 at 11:30 in Fellowship Hall. Please bring cookies or dessert to share and cookies to exchange.

## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

**Liturgist— Mindy Bunselmeyer**

**Ushers— Bunselmeyer Family**

**Communion Preparer— Rev. Jan Johnson**

## FFDO

The next FFDO will be at Coz's Pizza in Mt Zion on December 4 at 6:00. Let Sandy know if you will be joining them.

# Progressive Dinner +



We invite all of the congregation to join us for Progressive Dinner on December 7th beginning at 6pm. This year will again consist of two courses: (heavy)appetizers and desserts. Both hosting households are on the north end of town (Stacey & Don Carter and Julie Keck & Angel Wilson). Please RSVP to Julie Keck call/text 217-433-2543 or email [julieakeck@gmail.com](mailto:julieakeck@gmail.com) by Sunday, December 1st.

## Poinsettias for Christmas

Due to the increasing cost of flowers, we would like to try something new this year with the poinsettias at Christmas. Instead of them being purchased by Worship Music, we ask that you purchase your own flower and bring it to church December 19-21 and we will place them in the sanctuary. They can still be placed in honor of or in memory of a loved one, just be sure to notify Jackie when you bring your flower to church or leave a note by your plant. We will also have small sticks for you to write your name on and put them in the pot so you will be able to take your flower home with you whenever you wish. You can still contribute to the Scholarship fund or Memorial Fund as in the past in lieu of flowers..

# Finance Notes

## OCTOBER 2019 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>Oct 19</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$17,051.92	\$170,519.20
Budget Expense	\$17,947.02	\$179,470.20
Income	\$No Data	\$No Data
Expenses	\$No Data	\$No Data





# Happenings

## FFDO

Coz's Pizza

December 4

6:00 pm



## God's Busy Hands

Tuesdays

1:00 - 3:00 pm



God's Busy Hands

## Admin Meeting

Monday, December  
16

5:30 pm

## Council of Ministry Teams

Monday, December  
16

6:30 pm

## Choir

Thursdays

7:00 pm



Sing With Us

## First Ringers

Thursdays

5:45 pm



## Exploring Christian Faith Study Group

Sunday 10:30 am

Choir Room



# December Birthdays and Anniversaries

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
- 5. Julie Keck
- 8. Kelly Cantrell  
Jennie Wernecke
- 9. Mary Lou Phipps
- 14. Marylin Cushing  
Lynn Weltmer
- 15. Sally Lauer  
Aaron Taylor
- 17. Marilee Gordon
- 24. Janet Brownfield
- 25. Mary Yonan
- 29. Clinton Whitrock
- 30. Sandy Harmison  
Michael Longstreet
- 31. Robert Bunselmeyer  
Joe Robertson

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

- 11. Keith & Paula Carmichael
- 21. Dick & Gloria Cheatham
- 22. Gary & Patricia Weiss
- 27. Tom & Carol Cooley



# First Church Sunday Morning

	Date	9:00 AM Service	11:00 AM Service
 <b>LITURGISTS</b>	December 1	Melinda Redman	
	December 8	Dee Wenneker	
	December 15	Ellen Starace	
	December 22	Mindy Bunselmeyer	
	December 29	Darla Weltmer	
 <b>Altar Flowers</b>	December 1		
	December 8	Randy & Mary Beck	
	December 15		
	December 22	Christmas Poinsettias	
	December 29	Christmas Poinsettias	
 <b>Fellowship hour</b>	December 1	Gerry & Peggy Ruff	Steve & Kelli Fonseca
	December 8	Don Wenneker	Missy Boldizar
	December 15	Mike & Toni Longstreet	Betty Wheatley
	December 22	Everett Kuhn	Shirley Zimmerman & Ruby Voyles
	December 29	Kristin Hargrove	Sandy Harmison
 <b>USHERS</b>	December 1	Montana & Hayley Daniels, Dave Carpenter, Ellen Starace	Steve & Kelli Fonseca
	December 8	Chuck Zweck, Shelia Mannweiler, Frank & Shelly Smith	Mark & Jeanette Flenner
	December 15	Don & Dee Wenneker, Jim & Jodi Baldwin	Betty Wheatley
	December 22	Mike & Toni Longstreet, Ev Kuhn, Bob Bunselmeyer	Shirley Zimmerman & Ruby Voyles
	December 29	Robert & Penny Butts, Ted & Darby Mitchell	Sandy Harmison

Thank you to all who participate in these very important activities!

# December Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1 9:00</b> <b>Traditional</b> <b>10:00 Fellow</b> <b>ship Hour</b> <b>11:00 Con-</b> <b>temporary</b>	<b>2</b> <b>11:00</b> <b>Soup &amp; Bible</b> <b>Study</b>	<b>3</b> <b>1:00 God's</b> <b>Busy Hands</b> <b>7:00 Al-Anon</b> <b>8:00 AA</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> <b>5:45 Bell</b> <b>Choir</b> <b>Practice</b> <b>7:00 Choir</b> <b>Practice</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8 Annual</b> <b>Meeting</b> <b>Between</b> <b>Services</b>	<b>9</b> <b>11:00</b> <b>Soup &amp; Bible</b> <b>Study</b> <b>7:00 Property</b> <b>Meeting</b>	<b>10</b> <b>1:00 God's</b> <b>Busy Hands</b> <b>7:00 Al-Anon</b> <b>8:00 AA</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> <b>5:45 Bell</b> <b>Choir</b> <b>Practice</b> <b>7:00 Choir</b> <b>Practice</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15 9:00</b> <b>Music</b> <b>Sunday</b>	<b>16</b> <b>11:00</b> <b>Soup &amp; Bible</b> <b>Study</b> <b>5:30 Admin</b> <b>6:30 Council</b>	<b>17 1:00 God's</b> <b>Busy Hands</b> <b>7:00 Al-Anon</b> <b>8:00 AA</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> <b>5:45 Bell</b> <b>Choir</b> <b>Practice</b> <b>7:00 Choir</b> <b>Practice</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22 9:00</b> <b>Children's</b> <b>Pageant</b>	<b>23</b> <b>11:00</b> <b>Soup &amp; Bible</b> <b>Study</b>	<b>24</b> <b>1:00 God's</b> <b>Busy Hands</b> <b>7:00 Al-Anon</b> <b>8:00 AA</b>	<b>25</b> 	<b>26</b> <b>5:45 Bell</b> <b>Choir</b> <b>Practice</b> <b>7:00 Choir</b> <b>Practice</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29 9:00</b> <b>Traditional</b> <b>10:00 Fellow</b> <b>ship Hour</b> <b>11:00 Con-</b> <b>temporary</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> <b>1:00 God's</b> <b>Busy Hands</b> <b>7:00 Al-Anon</b> <b>8:00 AA</b>				



First Congregational UCC  
3465 N. MacArthur Rd.  
Decatur, IL 62526-1450

## 2019 Church Goals

Your Council of Ministry Teams has approved the following 3 goals for 2019:

### 2019 Church Goals

- Goal No. 1—Reestablish an active evangelism ministry
- Goal No. 2—Instituting new fellowship programs for working women, men and young families
- Goal No. 3—Hire a new pastor for the church.