

Congregational Comments

Vol. 21 No 2: February 2016

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

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

11:15-11:40 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

Season of Change

Lent officially begins on Ash Wednesday, February 10th. Please join us as we participate in this Christian tradition of receiving ashes, reflecting, confessing, and praying. Through these meaning-

ful ways we begin the 40 day journey preparing our souls for the new life made possible through Christ's resurrection at Easter. We may not yet feel the full warmth of the sun for there still will be some blasts of frigid air and snow, but we know that Spring is coming.

So, too, in our everyday lives the cold, sun-deprived days come - some bringing unwanted change, such as illness, job loss, death of a loved one, or destruction from a storm, loss of a safe place or other transition. On the worst of days it is hard to believe Spring will come again, that health will return, that a new chapter of life could bring new joys, new challenges, new meaning. But new life is indeed there, it maybe hidden from view. New life will break through the cold hard soil of doubt and fear and make its way toward full bloom. New life may take us through unexpected places, but it is there in Lent, God helping us discover again, "who we are," and "whose we are," and "the joy of serving God and others."

I imagine if we had nothing but Spring year round we'd eventually stop noticing it, stop being amazed by it's awesome color and beauty and stop being thankful for it.

As we make it through the cold, dark days of winter toward Spring, we begin to see the first budding leaves on the trees, the tips of flowers poking up in the flower beds, the return of the certain birds, which announces this wonderful miracle of Spring. So too, if we pay no attention to our souls, or the life of the Holy Spirit within us, we can experience the transformation of life in Christ's resurrection. Yet the more we are aware of the beauty, grace, wisdom and love of Jesus Christ, the more we experience new life with God and all others.

So how do we "do" Lent? There are many ways: making time for prayer and meditation, journaling, worshipping, reading, attending Bible Study, doing acts of kindness, doing acts of justice. Take time to reflect and write what you believe about your faith. What you believe about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, about being Christian, about

the Church, and about mission (serving others)? Take a look at how you relate to this faith to your family, friends, church, job, and being a citizen of this community, nation and world.

Waiting – whether for the earth’s annual turning to Spring or for the spiritual rebirth of Lent and Easter – need not be passive. Like other areas of life, the more you put into it, the more you get out it. Each season of our lives carries its own special beauty, its own needed grace. Being a church community means we “wait” together, not alone, and we help one another discover what God is offering us in each season of change.

*Come experience God’s amazing grace every **Sunday** in **worship 9 am Traditional** and **11 am Contemporary**. Our Sunday School is held during both worship services. We have 2 Adult Bible Studies that begins during the 10 AM hour. Come join us at **10 am** in the Fellowship Hall for delicious refreshments and great fellowship! Check our great children’s and youth **LOGOS** program on **Wednesdays** 4:45-7:15 PM. It’s gggreat!!*

February 10th – 7 PM you are invited to our **Ash Wednesday Service**, which will include the tradition of imposition of ashes. Come and share in this meaningful start to your Lenten season.

Pastor Dave

OUR SYMPATHY...

To the family of Shirley Richie. Shirley has been an active choir member of our church for many years. Shirley passed from this life to life eternal on January 9, 2016.

To the family of Bill Hickman. Bill passed from this life to life eternal on December 20, 2015.

We give thanks for Shirley and Bill’s lives and that they are now with God in life eternal. We pray God’s love and support be with their families and friends.

“I am the resurrection and the life; all who believe in me, though they die, yet shall live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”
John 11: 25-26

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Officers for 2016 are: Norma Lingenfelter and Betty Cummings Advisors, Treasurer Martha Crookshank, Secretary Ellen Whitrock and President Darla D. Weltmer.

FEBRUARY 12TH - second Friday - "Valentine Tea" - 1:00 PM

MARCH 18th - (3rd Friday) St. Pat's Day luncheon - reservations necessary - 12:00 noon

APRIL 15th - (3rd Friday) leave Church 11:00 AM for "The Smith House" - in Tuscola for lunch. Then shopping or what have you- especially the Chocolate place. Details later...reservations necessary.

MAY 20th - "Mothers Day Tea" 1:00 PM, details later

JUNE - possible Theater Day...will have details later

AUG 24th - Wed. rummage set up with meeting at noon with lunch - 25th Thurs. set up - 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM - Fri. 26th sale 8:00 - 4:00 - Sat the 27th 8:00 - 11:00. - Then cleanup and help to haul down to Blessingdales.

Either **Sept** 16th or **Oct.** 21st to the Orchard for Apple picking time. Details later

NOV. 18th, Details later

DEC. 16th "Annual Christmas Tea" - 1:00

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW and save the dates so you can join us in another great year of getting together.

Darla Weltmer

Decatur Area Church Women United

Decatur Area Church Women United will meet Monday, February 8th at 9:00 AM at the Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1360 W. Main Street. Bible Study will be led by Ardena Hunter leading us to World Day of Prayer to be held on Friday, March 4th at 1:00 PM at Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, 530 W. Mound Road. All are welcome to attend any of their meetings and Darla Weltmer would like for you to attend along with her. For further information call her at 877-7008.

THANK YOU

I am so pleased to have the caroling group stop by my house yesterday. I enjoyed all their singing. I miss not being in church at this time of the year. Will get back again soon.

A big thank you to each on them that braved the rainy day.

Betty Lou Johnston.

THANK YOU

A **GREAT HUGE** thank you to all who helped remove and place the Christmas decorations into boxes on Sunday, January 3. What an efficient and cooperative group! It goes so well when you all help. As I remember the following people were helpers: Bob and Sue Bunselmeyer, Peggy Druessel, Clarence and Carolyn Elliott, Kristin Hargrove, Ted and Darby Mitchell, Wesley Pietsch, Robert Ruehrup, Betty Wheatley and Chuck Zweck.

Clarence Elliott Worship/Music Ministry



QUESTIONS ABOUT ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

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 sharing 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	2 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	3 4:45-7:15 7:00 Adu
7 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	8 5:30 Admin Meeting 7:00 Property	9 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	10 4:45-7:15 7:00 Adu
14 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	15 6:00 Worship/Music 7:00 Church Council	16 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	17 4:45-7:15 7:00 Adu
21 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	22	23 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	24 4:45-7:15 7:00 Adu
28 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	29		

	Thu	Fri	Sat
5 LOGOS Adult Choir	4 5:45 First Ringers	5	6
5 LOGOS Adult Choir	11 5:45 First Ringers	12	13
5 LOGOS Adult Choir	18 1:15 Book Club 5:45 First Ringers	19	20 6:00-9:00 Couple's Night
5 LOGOS Adult Choir	25 5:45 First Ringers	26	27
			

CHILDREN'S NEWS!

Hey kids! Mark your calendar's for the following fun Sunday morning Socials. All are 10:15am between services in the Fellowship Hall

January 24th - Star Wars Social - Bring your favorite Star Wars costume to wear at the social and come see what game and giveaway we have for you!

February 14th - Valentine's Day Party

March 20th - Palm branch procession (during 1st service) and indoor Easter Egg Hunt!



DECEMBER 2015 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>Dec 15</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$17,753.08	\$213,036.96
Budget Expense	\$17,437.57	\$209,250.84
Income	\$25,050.51	\$215,211.10
Expenses	\$23,652.52	\$201,091.76

PLAYMATES

Playmates preschool had 2 new students enroll in January. We now have 18 students and we are prayerful that we will see growth in enrollment in the 2016-2017 school year. Watch the newsletter for some upcoming events such as Open House, registration for the 2016-2017 school year and summer camp.

The students have been busy learning about all things winter. We had "Hibernation Day" mid January and the kids wore their pajamas to school, we made forts, enjoyed special treat and had a "snowball" fight. I think we teachers enjoyed it just as much as the kids, if not more! We will be having a special Gingerbread Day at the end of the month which is always a lot of fun.

We also had a students mom, who is a policeman come in and talk to the kids about the role of a police officer, safety and the kids got to ask questions. The students LOVED this! In February we have a dental hygienist lined up to come in as a guest speaker.

We are truly blessed with the kids and families that are a part of Playmates this year. We are all learning & growing and thank God that for each one of them. We ask for your prayers as we plan the rest of year and look towards the next school year. Thank you!

Melanie Brown



GENERAL INFORMATION

Time and Talent Sheets

We need your help. Please make out your Time and Talent Sheets for the church. We need this information on who will volunteer to help various ministries. There are copies in the narthex at church and under the mailboxes near the office. If you intended to fill one out, please do so as soon as possible and return to the office.

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

Primrose Retirement Community

Claude Young—Room 228

Lois Shelton—Room 132

Imboden Gardens

Harriette Horn—Room 120

Keystone

Carolyn Jones—Room 216

Vonderlieth Living Center, Mt. Pulaski, IL

Alice Roach

Fair Havens Christian Home

Al Wilson—Room 425

Evergreen Place

Mary Lou Phipps— Room 333



YOUTH ACTIVITIES

SUPER BOWL

It will soon be time for **THE SUPER BOWL**. You can't stop it, so you might as well get prepared for it, and the Youth Group has a great idea. On February 7, 2016, if you are having a party or just relaxing in your arm-chair, why not enjoy the game with a big plate of **Chili Mac** prepared for you by our very own Youth Group. You can even pick it up between services that morning.

The Youth will be taking orders between services in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, January 31. You can also call the Church office (877-2216), email Joe Moretti at ajmo40@comcast.net, or tell any Youth Ministry member how much you need by January 31 and it will be ready for you on February 7.

All proceeds will go toward the Youth Mission Trip in July 2016.

SWEETHEART DINNER

On Saturday, February 13, 2016 the Youth will be hosting the Annual Sweetheart Dinner at 6:00 p.m. This event, held in Fellowship Hall, will be a pasta dinner and Trivia Night for families. Tickets are \$5 per person or \$15 for a family (up to 5) and can be purchased from any member of the youth group between services in Fellowship Hall, youth ministry, or ask Kapora in the church office. 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 2016 youth Mission Trip to Manderson South Dakota in July.



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. Judi Carpenter
William Huebner
8. Katherine Koyak
Harriette Horn
10. Christen Cantrell
12. Keith Carmichael
13. Andrew Mower
15. Rick Boldizar
17. Nellie Brookhauzen
Clarence Elliott
Alice Roach
Hannah Cordts
Shirley Young
18. Devon Moretti
Marsha Mower
19. Jean Hoelzen
20. Benjamin Carter
Mable McCane
23. Janet Mockaitis
24. Joe Flies
27. Quincy Janvrin
28. Pat Mahr

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!



FIRST SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 7

LITURGIST: Sharon Burbes

FLOWERS: Betty Henry

COFFEE: Chuck Zweck

USHERS/GREETER: Women's
Fellowship

FEBRUARY 10

LITURGIST: Bobbie Taylor

USHERS/GREETER: Jim & Jodi
Baldwin, Amy Leman, Bill Huebner

FEBRUARY 14

LITURGIST: Marsha Mower

FLOWERS: Todd & Christina Clark

COFFEE: Sandi Pleasants

USHERS/GREETER: Clark
Family

FEBRUARY 21

LITURGIST: Bill Huebner

FLOWERS: Frank & Shelly Smith

COFFEE: Gary & Pat Weiss

USHERS/GREETER: Marylin
Cushing, Bob Bunselmeyer, Mike
Koyak, Marilee Gordon

FEBRUARY 28

LITURGIST: Chuck Zweck

FLOWERS: Ted & Darby Mitchell

COFFEE: Ellen Starace, Kristin
Hargrove

USHERS/GREETER: Mike
Koyak, Al Gerhold, Pat & Margie
Malone

SECOND SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 7

USHER/GREETER: Sandy
Harmison

REFRESHMENTS: Sandy
Harmison

FEBRUARY 14

USHER/GREETER: Leigh
Myers

REFRESHMENTS: Angie Miller

FEBRUARY 21

USHER/GREETER: Ruski-
Moretti Family

REFRESHMENTS: Ruski-
Moretti Family

FEBRUARY 28

USHER/GREETER: Betty
Wheatley

REFRESHMENTS: Betty
Wheatley



