

Congregational Comments

Vol. 22 No 2: February 2017

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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

11:15-11:40 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

This daily devotional is exactly spot on! After all, we wouldn't have 'How Great Thou Art' or 'In the Garden' or even 'Jesus Loves Me' if folks had stopped singing it because they didn't know it and it wasn't what they were used to singing. Mary Luti gives us something to consider when we see a new song listed in the bulletin. After all, the Psalmist did not say we should make a harmonious noise to the Lord, just a Joyful one.

February Blessings,
Jan

"Sing God a new song, for God has done marvelous things..." - Psalm 98:1 Some church folk would rather drink battery acid than sing a new hymn. And it's not just contemporary music they resist: even an unfamiliar traditional hymn has them bracing for the fall of civilization. Sing something new? Oh, the humanity! It's like suggesting they dance sky-clad in the moonlight on the village green.

Yet Scripture commands it: Sing God a new song! Why? Because God has done marvelous things. And God keeps doing them, bending history's moral arc towards justice, inspiring movements of liberating hope, sending prophets to stand between tyrants and the poor; freely saving, mending, making joy and making peace. No, the same old songs won't cut it. Only new songs are adequate to the vast, accomplished grace around us.

Of course, scripture isn't demanding that we scrap every hymn composed before 2016. Our psalmist waxeth metaphorical here, and so do I. It isn't about new songs as such. It's about the nimbleness of our imaginations, the agility of our souls, the creativity of our faith. It's about whether we look, act, and sound like we belong to an original God who makes mercy new every morning, or to a tatty old deity who dozed off after creating and hasn't done much since.

Worn-out, threadbare songs suit a worn-out faith in a threadbare God. The singing that scripture commands is the sound made by people for whom life is all astounding gift, whose alert hearts register the vibrations of mercy thrumming everywhere, who love the adventure of marvelous grace, and fear nothing at all except missing the ride.

Prayer

New lives sing new songs, O God. Refresh me now, and let me sing original praise for your wonderful love.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mary Luti is a long time seminary educator and pastor, author of *Teresa of Avila's Way* and numerous articles, and founding member of The Daughters of Abraham, a national network of interfaith women's book groups.



Pastor Jan at work in the church



Pastor Jan at Rally Day

Photo by Clarence Elliott

Rev. Ryan Travis

Rev. Ryan Travis grew up on a 10-acre hobby farm in Lynnville, a small town in southern Indiana near Evansville. He attended Tecumseh High School, where he was a starting lineman on the state's top-ranked Class A football team. During his senior year, he won a statewide competition in constitutional knowledge, earning an appointment to the United States Senate Youth Program and launching a lifelong interest in government and civics.

Raised an only child and largely outside the church, Ryan accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior at age 18. Soon after, he became a campus ministry leader at Purdue University, where he studied meteorology and communication. Though he felt an early call to ministry, Ryan turned his focus to the political world. He became a political consultant in state capitals across the country, including Indianapolis, St. Paul, and Harrisburg.

After serving as senior campaign coordinator on the first contested Louisville mayoral contest in decades, Ryan enrolled at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He graduated with a master of divinity *magna cum laude* in 2009. Ryan served as the seminary's first intern to the Kentucky Race Track Chaplaincy at Churchill Downs, where he ministered to horse workers and the track's 200-strong worshipping community for 3 years. During seminary, Ryan also served as the sole pastoral leader of Bethany Lutheran Church and on-call chaplain at University of Louisville Hospital's level one trauma center.

After graduation, Ryan completed a year-long chaplain residency at Deaconess Hospital in Evansville. Intending to pursue doctoral studies in church history at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Ryan soon discovered God had other plans. He received a surprise call in April 2013 as pastor of historic Salem United Church of Christ in downtown Harrisburg. Coming from the Lutheran tradition, Pastor Travis received ecclesiastical authorization to serve the congregation while he completed the ordination requirements of the United Church of Christ. After 7 years of pastoral ministry experience, Rev. Travis was formally ordained in 2016.

Ryan's favorite book of the Bible is Hebrews, and he's memorized large sections. He's a weather nut who loves stormchasing and snow. He likes to vacation in coastal Maine and Canada. You'll find him out hiking or running any chance he gets. And he insists he's one day going to finish that doctorate.

Ryan thinks every pastor's bio should end with this: "If I have the gift of [preaching] and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:2).

Our New Pastor Rev. Ryan Travis



Pastor Ryan signing his contract with the church



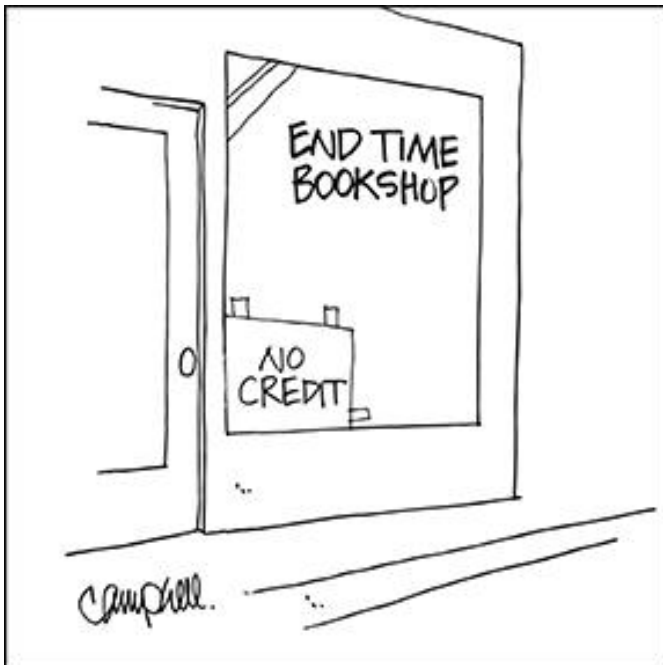
Pastor Ryan during the meet and greet

PRAYER CHAIN UPDATE

Beginning January 1, 2017, Bette Fankhauser has graciously agreed to assume the responsibility of Prayer Chain Coordinator. Prayer requests may be sent to Bette via email at blfankhauser@comcast.net or by phone at 877- 6723. Many thanks to Bette for agreeing to take on this role!

FFDO

FFDO for February will actually be FTDO (First Thursday Dinner Out). We are meeting at Richland Community College's Bistro 537 for dinner at 6:00 on February 2. Give me a call or email me by Feb 1 to reserve your spot. This restaurant can always be counted on to offer a different variety of food selections. Come join us for food and conversation on Feb 2.



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Women's Fellowship is planning a supper party for their February 3rd 1:00 Gathering to celebrate Valentine Day. Chocolate, strawberries, valentines, candy...you think of some great special items and come celebrate with us. We plan to play some games and ask that you bring a wrapped gift or 2 (or 4) for prizes, and come and enjoy the day with us. Mark your calendars NOW! As we develop details we will keep you informed.

Women's Fellowship Calendar

March 17 12:00 noon our Annual Irish Luncheon \$5.00 charge for meal and program will be announced.

May 5 Decatur Area Church Women United May Friendship Day Celebration - hosted by our Church
1:00 - (fellowship hall)

June we plan a trip but details not worked out yet

August 23 - 24 - 25 - 26 Our Annual Rummage Sale - SAVE -
SAVE - SAVE

End of Sept or October will be a trip to the Apple Orchard and details as the apples develop!!

December 1st our Annual Christmas Tea Party and Cookie Swap and a Christmas Program (to be announced)

Please mark your calendars for the set dates and keep them open to attend.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
			1 7:00 Cho
5 Youth Pick up date for Super Bowl spaghetti	6	7 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	8 4:15-6:45 7:00 Cho
12 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship 12:00-2:30 Changed by Love	13 5:30 Admin Meeting	14 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	15 4:15-6:45 7:00 Cho
19 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	20 5:30 Church Council	21 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	22 4:15-6:45 7:00 Cho
26 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	27	28 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	

	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 5:45 First Ringers	3 1:00 Women's Fellowship Tea Party	4 8:00-11:00 AA	
5 LOGOS 9 5:45 First Ringers	10	11	
5 LOGOS 16 1:15 Book Club 5:45 First Ringers	17	18 6:00 Sweetheart Dinner & Trivia Night	
5 LOGOS 23 5:45 First Ringers	24	25	
			

From Your Church President.....

Happy New Year! As we begin 2017 at First Church we have much to celebrate and look forward to. It is an honor to continue serving as your church president. During this year of transition, we will “listen” with an open ear for the plans God has for us, work together to discern what God is calling us to do and be, and trust Him to lead us where He would have us go.

We begin the year implementing our new “ministry team” model, which you approved at a Special Congregational Meeting last October. Our Council of Ministry Teams will review and evaluate on a monthly basis, making any needed “tweaks” as the year progresses. The Administration Team and Council are setting three goals for the year. At the current time Goals 1 and 2 have been agreed to and Goal 3 is under further discussion.

- Goal No. 1 - Review our organization structure to better align with other United Church of Christ churches of our size and improve the staffing and effectiveness of our ministries. *(2017 will see a revision/consolidation of our Constitution, By-Laws and Organizational Manual that will be presented to the congregation for approval in the 4th quarter.)*
- Goal No. 2 - Develop new Outreach ministries to Decatur and the surrounding area.
- Goal No. 3 – *select something specific, rather than broad, that we want to grow.*

Rev Jan Johnson, will end her time with us on Sunday, February 19. We have been truly blessed and give thanks for her loving guidance and support during her Designated Pastorate and wish her well on the next chapter of her pastoral journey. We will have a reception between services on the 19th, to say good-bye and celebrate her ministry at First Church.

The work of our Pastoral Search Committee culminated in an affirmative vote on January 8 to elect Pastor Ryan Travis as our Pastor, extend the call to him and approve the terms of the call. Many thanks to the PSC members for their hard work (Don Wenneker, chair; Jeanette Flenner; Ev Kuhn; Chris Leman; Devon Moretti; Peggy Ruff; Terry Stoa; Marsha Mower, President/Ex-Officio). We look forward to the start of Pastor Ryan’s ministry at First Church on February 20. (FYI – that also happens to be his birthday, so we invite you to send cards to the church office!)

I look forward to your continued patience, prayers and support in the coming year. GOD IS GOOD and continues to bless us with new opportunities! We have much to be thankful for and much to be in prayer about. 2017 promises to be another exciting year at First Church and I look forward to continuing to serve as your president.

May God richly bless each and every one of you!

Marsha Mower

JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE Rev Jan Johnson's time as our Designated Pastor on Sunday, February 19. Our worship services will include the departure litany and there will be a reception between services in fellowship hall. We hope you will all participate in this time of thanks and celebration!

WELCOME Pastor Ryan Travis. Monday, February 20 is Pastor Ryan's first day with us. Please join us in welcoming him to our First Church family. This is also his birthday and you are invited to send or drop off cards at the church office.

ASH WEDNESDAY Soup Supper will again be hosted by LOGOS on Wednesday, March 1, 5:45-6:45 in Fellowship Hall. The congregation is encouraged to join us for this annual event. RSVPs are appreciated, but not required.

DECEMBER 2016 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>Dec 16</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$18,431.00	\$221,172.00
Budget Expense	\$17,971.56	\$215,658.72
Income	\$18,689.93	\$204,794.07
Expenses	\$16,603.89	\$190,605.26

THANK YOU

A big thank you to First Church, Pastor Jan, Shirley, Bette, Pat who gave me a great send off. I am finally feeling ALMOST settled - at least there are pictures on the wall, furniture in the living room, a sofa in the 2nd bedroom that makes into a very comfortable queen bed. So you all come down and visit me. I am a few blocks south of the Galleria and closer than that to more great shopping. And I do enjoy company. 9160 Robin Court, St. Louis, MO 63144

Please note that my e mail has been changed to janpot-tiede@gmail.com. My phone numbers remain the same as both home and cell are Verizon. Love to you all. Janet

Our Mitten Tree in Fellowship Hall was loaded with warm gifts for the DOVE Christmas baskets. This tree collected 54 pairs of gloves and mittens, 32 scarves, 84 hats, 2 leg warmers, 3 blankets, 4 Christmas stockings and a box of new toys. Many of these items were beautifully hand knitted and lovingly crocheted by our church family. Many families will be warmer this winter thanks to your generosity. Thank you from DOVE and from Outreach Ministry. **Our church family is the best!**

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 208

Fair Haven Christian Home

Lois Shelton—Room 113



YOUTH ACTIVITES

SUPERBOWL CHILI MAC

The Youth will be in fellowship hall between services on Sunday January 29th to take your order for Chili Mac for your Super Bowl Sunday. You get ½ gallon of Chili Mac for \$12.50 that will be ready to pick up between services on Super Bowl Sunday February 5th. All proceeds will go towards funding the Youth Activity Fund. Thank you for your support.

SWEETHEART DINNER & TRIVIA NIGHT

On Saturday, February 18, 2017 the Youth will be hosting the Annual Sweetheart Dinner and Trivia Night at 6:00 p.m. This event, held in Fellowship Hall, is a pasta dinner 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 Peggy 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 Youth Activity Fund.

Decatur Area Church Women United

Decatur Area Church Women United will hold their Representative Meeting and Bible Study leading to World Day of Prayer on Monday, February 13th at the Church of the Annunciation, 570 N. Union at 9:00 AM. Bible Study is led by Ardena Hunter.

World Day of Prayer Celebration will be held Friday March 3rd 1:00 PM at the First United Methodist Church, 201 W. North Street and all are welcome to attend. All are welcome to attend. To attend and need a ride call Darla Weltmer 877-7008 or e-mail Lmweltmer@juno.com



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

3. Judi Carpenter
William Huebner
8. Katherine Koyak
10. Christen Cantrell
12. Keith Carmichael
13. Andrew Mower
15. Rick Boldizar
17. Nellie Brookhauzen
Clarence Elliott
Alice Roach
Shirley Young
18. Devon Moretti
Marsha Mower
20. Benjamin Carter
Mable McCane
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 5

LITURGIST: Darla Weltmer
FLOWERS: Bill & Alice Huebner
COFFEE: Kristin Hargrove
USHERS/GREETER:

FEBRUARY 12

LITURGIST: Bill Huebner
FLOWERS: Robert Ruehrup
COFFEE: Pat & Margie Malone
USHERS/GREETER:

FEBRUARY 19

LITURGIST: Melinda Redman
FLOWERS: Debby Beal
COFFEE: Betty Cummings
USHERS/GREETER:

FEBRUARY 26

LITURGIST: Penny Butts
FLOWERS: Ted & Darby Mitchell
COFFEE: Kristin Hargrove
USHERS/GREETER:

SECOND SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 5

USHER/GREETER: Praise Band
REFRESHMENTS: Sandy
Harmison

FEBRUARY 12

USHER/GREETER: Wes Pietsch
REFRESHMENTS: Wes Pietsch

FEBRUARY 19

USHER/GREETER: Kathy
Richardson
REFRESHMENTS: Kathy
Richardson

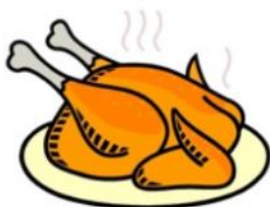
FEBRUARY 26

USHER/GREETER: Devon
Moretti
REFRESHMENTS: Angie Miller



LSA presents,

Nelson's Chicken Dinner Fundraiser



at Lutheran School Association

2001 East Mound Road

February 17, 2017

4-7pm

*Dine in and Drive Thru
pick up options available!

*Proceeds benefit the LSA
Parent Teacher League!

\$10 Meals include:

½ grilled chicken (gluten free)

Mashed Potatoes & gravy

Green beans

Dinner roll

Tickets must be purchased by **January 30!**

For Tickets:

- Call LSA at (217) 233-2001
- or visit the LSA ReSale Shop at 421 E. Cerro Gordo St.
- ask an LSA Student



217-787-9443

www.nelsonscatering.com