

Congregational Comments

Vol. 22 No 1: January 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



*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 Jan Johnson

FROM THE PASTOR

During the Children's Message on the first Sunday of the New Year, I had an empty calendar for the upcoming year. We were looking at the pictures – snow for January, hearts for February, Shamrocks for March. And I remember making a comment about how empty the calendar was – there were no notes about meetings or family gatherings or calls that needed to be made. The Sunday School Superintendent's 4 year old piped up, "Well, THAT's good, isn't it?" Of course, the congregation was laughing and shaking their heads and his mother was slouching down further in the pew.

The New Year, #2017 in our calendar, is another fresh start. And this year we begin on the Sabbath; the day of rest. (probably good news for all those who were out partying to bring in the new year) It's also a time to think forward. What will the new year bring? For this congregation it will bring a new pastor with new possibilities for ministry among the people of Decatur. It will bring a new structure to your leadership circle and hopefully, it will bring additional people who volunteer to help out in ways that are spiritually fulfilling for everyone. January 1 sets us up for new beginnings, new ways to be the Body of Christ, new hope for reaching out and touching the lives of those who need to hear Christ's message of love and joy, peace and hope, healing and salvation.

We don't usually say these words which are included in the Order for Word and Sacrament I as the Song of Simeon: "Holy One, now let your servant go in peace; your word has been fulfilled: my own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of your people: a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel." We have waited in darkness and prepared as best we could for the coming of the Christ, born in Bethlehem. With Simeon we rejoice that we have seen the 'salvation which God has prepared in our sight'.

This year will be filled with newness, as each year is. Will we embrace that newness? Will we celebrate with Simeon, having seen what God has gifted us? Will we find the desire to share that vision with the world

around us? It is my hope and prayer for 2017 that this church and all churches would find that light and learn how to share that revelation with the world around us in ever new and changing ways.

My prayer for you all is that you find God's will for your lives and your church and share it with everyone!

A Blessed New Year!

Jan

From January 2 through 15, Rev. Mark Schleeter will be on call for emergencies, hospital calls, funerals. 217 – 875-5119. Mark will be filling the pulpit at both services on January 15 as well.

Death of an Import Member of the Church

Our church was saddened to learn this week of the death of one of our most valued members, Someone Else.

For many, many years as a part of this church, Someone Else did far more than a normal person's share of the work. Whenever there was a job to do, a class to teach, or a meeting to attend, everybody said, "Let Someone Else do it." Whenever leadership was mentioned, this wonderful person was looked to for inspiration as well as results; "Someone Else can work with that group.'

It was common knowledge that Someone Else was among the most generous givers. Whenever there was a financial need, everyone assumed Someone Else would make up the difference.

Now Someone Else is gone! We wonder what we are going to do. Someone Else left a wonderful example to follow, but who is going to follow it? Who is going to do the things Someone Else did? Please help where you are able. We need volunteers for all part of the church.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM YOUR PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE:

November 22, 2016

Dear Members of First Church & Friends in Christ,

Your Pastoral Search Committee (“PSC”) is pleased to announce that we have extended a call to a pastor who has verbally accepted it. The Administrative Ministry and Church Council have been notified and both bodies have given their unanimous support for this call. The call is subject to final approval by the Congregation at a meeting immediately following the second service on Sunday, January 8, 2017. An official notice of that meeting with more details about the Pastor will be forthcoming.

The PSC believes that this candidate, in his early 40’s, has the combination of skills that you told us you wanted to see in a new pastor. Just to refresh your memories you asked for a pastor who...

- Is an effective preacher/speaker
- Makes pastoral calls to the sick and confined
- Is effective at planning and leading worship
- Works to bring in new members, and
- Is compassionate and caring

The terms of the call are within the guidelines provided to us by the Conference and the financial implications are within the guidelines that Admin provided the PSC.

Important dates include:

- December 26, 2016: formal notice regarding a Congregational Meeting to be held on January 8th
- January 7, 2017: “Meet and Greet” reception from 2-4 pm in the Fellowship Hall
- January 8, 2017: trial sermons at each service, a Congregational Meeting after the second service to formally approve the call, and a pot luck meal immediately following the meeting
- February 20, 2017: start date

Upon accepting our call, the Pastor wrote “*Handing over the reins of a congregation to a new pastor is always an exercise in faith. I do not take your call or trust lightly. I pledge, with the help of God, to do my best to lead First Congregational Church in Decatur in a manner that glorifies our Savior while strengthening our family of faith*”. The Pastor had calls from other churches, but he chose us after a visit to Decatur and prayerful consideration of each of the calls he had received.

Thank you all for your support throughout this search process.

Additionally, we would like to thank Pastor Jan for her loving guidance and support during her time with us as Designated Pastor. She will continue to serve First Congregational UCC through February 19, 2017.

Respectfully,

Pastoral Search Committee

Jeanette Flenner, Ev Kuhn, Chris Leman, Devon Moretti, Marsha Mower (ex-officio), Peggy Ruff, Terry Stoa and Don Wenneker (chair)

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!

THANK YOU

Mark and I appreciate every prayer, good thought, text, email, card, and call that our church family provided during my mom's recent illness and death. You are simply the best. Wishing all of you many blessings in the coming year. Jeanette

First Friday Dinner Out

First Friday Dinner Out for January 2017 will be at Bizou on January 6 at 6:00. The fellowship always makes this outing a good time! Please let me know if you will be joining us by January 5. Thanks. Sandy Harmison



THANK YOU

THANK-YOU to Missy Boldizar, Rick Boldizar, Judi Carpenter, Christina Huckile, James Huckile, Rev Jan Johnson, Devon Moretti, Marsha Mower, Carol Robertson, Robert Ruehrup, Mark Schleeter and Grace Stanley for caroling to our home and facility bound friends. We visited thirteen people and had a wonderfully blessed day! Two of our families had illness, so we were unable to see them. Thanks also to Children's Ministry for donating church cups, that were filled with candy, and presented along with an ornament and card.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
1 Church Services 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	2	3 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	4
8 Church Services 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	9 5:30 Admin	10 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	11 4:15-6:45 7:30 Cho
15 Church Services 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	16 7:00 Church Council	17 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	18 4:15-6:45 7:30 Cho
22 Church Services 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship 12:00 Music Staff Meeting	23	24 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	25 4:15-6:45 7:30 Cho
29 Church Services 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	30	31 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	

Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>5 LOGOS Choir</p>	<p>12</p> <p>5:45 First Ringers</p>	<p>13</p> <p>14</p>
<p>5 LOGOS Choir</p>	<p>19</p> <p>1:15 Book Club</p> <p>5:45 First Ringers</p>	<p>20</p> <p>21</p>
<p>5 LOGOS Choir</p>	<p>26</p> <p>5:45 First Ringers</p>	<p>27</p> <p>28</p>



From Your Church President.....

What a year 2016 has been at First Church! It has been an honor to serve again as your church president. It has been a year of “listening” with an open ear for the plans God has for us, working together to discern what God is calling us to do and be, and trusting Him to lead us where He would have us go.

Early in 2016, Administrative Ministry and Church Council approved four goals and work continued on all of them throughout the year.

- 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.
- Goal No. 2 - Continue to expand and improve fellowship activities within our church to cause more socialization and comradery between attendees of both services, age groups, and those who lead our ministries.
- Goal No. 3 - Increase attendance to our church offerings including Sunday services, social gatherings, bible studies, and youth and children activities to share God’s word with as many of our friends, neighbors, and relatives as possible.
- Goal No. 4 – Develop new Outreach ministries to Decatur and the surrounding area.

At a Special Meeting of the Congregational on October 16 we approved the Goal 1 Action Plan, suspending the Organizational Manual for one year while implementing the changes, and extending the current Officer terms for a year for continuity during the implementation.

Pastor Dave and Bobbie Taylor announced their retirement and completed their ministry with us in June. Kapora Boone, our Administrative Secretary, moved on to a new position and Chuck Zweck served as our Interim Administrative Secretary. Peggy Mennel joined us on June 13 as our new Office Administrator. She has been a joy to work with. Rev Jan Johnson joined us as our Designated Pastor on July 1 and we have been blessed by her time with us.

Our Pastoral Search Committee was elected at a Special Meeting of the Congregation on June 26 and has worked very diligently to find the perfect candidate for First Church. 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 meeting the candidate on January 7 and hearing him preach on January 8. A Congregational Meeting will take place at noon to approve extending the official

call to him, followed by a potluck in fellowship hall. The start date for the new pastor will be February 20.

On Sunday, February 19, we will say good-bye to Rev Jan and celebrate her ministry at First Church. We give thanks for her loving guidance and support during her time as our Designated Pastor.

At our Annual Meeting on December 4, we celebrated our sound financial position, another successful Stewardship Campaign, approved a Budget, and elected and installed the Officers and Ministry Team Co-Leaders for 2017. Many thanks to all our ministry chairs and members for their work in 2016, providing wonderful ministry opportunities within our church and community.

Thank-you for your patience, prayers and support throughout 2016! 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 Frist Church and I look forward to serving as your president again.

May God richly bless each and every one of you!

Marsha Mower

NOVEMBER 2016 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>Nov 16</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$18,431.00	\$
Budget Expense	\$17,971.56	\$
Income	\$	\$
Expenses	\$	\$



**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







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

4. Alice Huebner
8. Ross Hartman
10. Paul DeBruine
Kathy Richardson
12. Carolyn Elliott
13. Ann Gerhold
16. Ted Mitchell
Jerome Scherer
19. Gloria Cheatham
Betty Johnson
20. Gary Sawyer
21. Homer Leoucis
24. Ned Cummings
Susan Daley
25. Marlene Gant
26. Mark Daley
29. Carol Blackwell
Shirley Zimmerman

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!

20. Mark & Jeanette Flenner



FIRST SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

JANUARY 1

LITURGIST: Marilee Gordon

FLOWERS:

COFFEE: No Coffee Service

USHERS/GREETER:

JANUARY 8

LITURGIST: Minday Bunslemeyer

FLOWERS:

COFFEE: Chuck Zwick

USHERS/GREETER:

JANUARY 15

LITURGIST: Amy Leman

FLOWERS:

COFFEE: Sheila Mannweiler,
Laurel Lorey

USHERS/GREETER:

JANUARY 22

LITURGIST: Ellen Starace

FLOWERS:

COFFEE: Lynn & Darla Weltmer

USHERS/GREETER:

JANUARY 29

LITURGIST: Melinda Redman

FLOWERS:

COFFEE: Ellen Starace

USHERS/GREETER:

SECOND SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

JANUARY 1

USHER/GREETER: Sandy
Harmison

REFRESHMENTS: Sandy
Harmison

JANUARY 8

USHER/GREETER: Wes Pietsch

REFRESHMENTS: Wes Pietsch

JANUARY 15

USHER/GREETER: Ruby
Voyles/Shirley Zimmerman

REFRESHMENTS: Ruby
Voyles/Shirley Zimmerman

JANUARY 22

USHER/GREETER: Mark &
Jeanette Flenner

REFRESHMENTS: Mark &
Jeanette Flenner

JANUARY 29

USHER/GREETER: Betty
Wheatley

REFRESHMENTS: Betty
Wheatley



