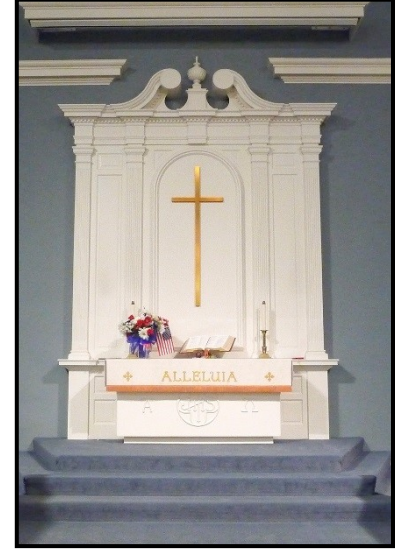


# Congregational Comments



**Vol. 23 No. 1: January 2018**

## Important Contacts in the Church

**Pastor:** Rev. Ryan Travis, 217-413-4272

Email: [pastorryan@firstchurchdecaturn.org](mailto:pastorryan@firstchurchdecaturn.org)

**Prayer Chain:** Bette Fankhauser, 877-6723

Email: [bfankhauser@comcast.com](mailto:bfankhauser@comcast.com)

**Playmates Preschool:** Interim Director: Alfreda Tribout

**Newsletter Editor:** Bill Huebner, 876-1446, cell 855-7677

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

## Church Contact Information:

3465 N. MacArthur Rd.

Decatur, IL 62526

Telephone: 877-2216

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

Website: [www.firstchurchdecaturn.org](http://www.firstchurchdecaturn.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 Ryan



**Pastor Ryan**

*"Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.' But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one."*

– Matthew 5:33-37

None of us knows what the future holds. As created beings, we are not only subject to unpredictable forces of nature, we are also incapable of delving deeply into the mind of God to see what has been planned for us. Jesus warns that we should be careful about making promises, especially those that require us to keep them even if circumstances change. In the ancient world, your word was everything; if you said you were going to do something – and swore to it under oath – you were absolutely expected to do it, or your reputation would be utterly ruined. Today, that is not so much the case. Loopholes exist in almost every contract, and if a person doesn't keep his or her word in non-contractual relationships, there are rarely consequences beyond grumbling and complaining. That doesn't mean, however, that there aren't hurt feelings. If we say one thing and then do another, other people can experience the disappointment of unmet expectations – and that can cause problems in the church, families, cities, and workplaces.

I try to be careful in my speech, generally saying, "I don't intend to..." or "My plan is to..." rather than "I certainly will..." or "I'm definitely doing..." I also try to outline what I see might be potential reasons my intention might not come to pass, "I'll do this, but there's always the possibility that..."

Why? Isn't that mealy-mouthed and wishy-washy? Not at all! James warns us that God is sovereign, and that we are not. He says we need to eat some humble pie by recognizing what we think we're going to do might not be what actually transpires. He writes, "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.' Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.' But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil" (James 4:13-16).

Do you hear the similarity to what Christ spoke in Matthew 5?

What I am saying, beloved, is this: Circumstances change. God calls us in directions we never imagined on timetables we don't design. The only sure thing we have from God is today, so we are called to live in it and do the work we have for this 24-hours. Beyond that, we really don't know. So, let's not overpromise and under-deliver, but let's remain open and flexible to the movement of God's Spirit. Change is unavoidable and our dreams are subject to divine revision. Let's not waste excessive time hanging on to what we have or mourning when it passes. Let's embrace the day, enjoy the moment now, and trust God to handle our tomorrows.

In Christ,

Ryan



# EVENTS



**Sunday  
Dec. 17**



**A Traditional Christmas Pageant  
Presented by the children of our church**

# Elevator Capital Campaign



Our 3-year capital campaign for a new elevator lift is underway. Dubbed "Lifting Spirits," our goal is to raise \$50,000 by 2020. Construction can begin as soon as \$30,000 is raised. You should receive a pledge card and envelope in the mail. If you haven't already pledged, please consider making a gift, if you are able. Making our building more accessible for all is an important priority. If you'd like your contribution to count toward this tax year, please return your donation to the office by Dec. 31.

## Thank You

### ***WITH MANY THANKS . . .***

After 9-1/2 years of preparing breakfast for all of us, Helen Johnson is retiring from weekly cooking at Fellowship Hour. We have appreciated her many homemade goodies and all her hard work planning the menus, shopping for and preparing food during the week, cooking each Sunday, and cleaning up after Fellowship Hour. Now we look forward to spending time with Helen as she enjoys eating and visiting with all of us in Fellowship Hour. When you see Helen, please express your gratitude for her dedication in serving us.

### **Thank you to God's Busy Hands**

Thank you to all of you for celebrating my 90th Birthday in such a special way! You are the best.

Laurel Larey



# Activities at the Church



**Chuck is ready for  
Christmas**

**Hanging  
Of  
The  
Greens  
December 2**



**We hope the church's  
Insurance is paid up.**



**Pastor Ryan installs the new officers at the Annual Meeting**

# Goodbye Marsha



**Goodbye Marsha, we will miss you.**

---

Many thanks to our family and friends at First Church for the going away reception, as well as all your love and support over the years! We are very blessed to have such a wonderful church family and will keep you close in our hearts after our move to Minnesota. I will always consider First Church my "home," even though I will be finding a new place of worship. My prayers will be with you as you continue your ministry in Decatur and beyond. Please keep in touch and if you are ever in our area, we would love to have visitors. (7626 White Overlook Dr., Breezy Point MN 56472; 217-412-8797; mmower@sbcglobal.net). May you be richly blessed by God in all that you do!

Marsha and Skip Mower



# Removal of the Greens

Save the Date: January 7, 2018—Please join us at 9:00 am to help remove the decorations in the Sanctuary. We had a tremendous turnout for the Hanging of the Green and hope you can give us an hour or two of your time to put everything away for another year!

## Finance Notes

### **NOVEMBER 2017 FINANCIAL REPORT**

	<u>Nov 17</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$18,288.92	\$201,178.12
Budget Expense	\$17,714.72	\$194,861.92
Income	\$13,494.84	\$178,491.90
Expenses	\$14,871.47	\$177,567.45



# Calling all Volunteers

## CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers needed for Adult and Youth Ministries' 2018 Events

Christian Nurture Ministry is seeking volunteers to lead the 2018 Year's Events for both the Adult and Youth Ministries.

You may elect to be a co-leader for the entire year, you may choose one event to help organize or choose as many as you may feel called to do.

Our preference is to have at least three volunteers for each event.

- ❖ MOTHER/DAUGHTER BANQUET (USUALLY APRIL OR MAY)
- ❖ EASTER BREAKFAST (APRIL 1)
- ❖ THANKSGIVING DINNER (NOV 11)
- ❖ PROGRESSIVE DINNER (MAY BE REPLACED WITH A SUMMER COOKOUT)
- ❖ YOUTH - SENIOR DINNER (LATE JANUARY)
- ❖ YOUTH - SUPER BOWL FUNDRAISER (FEBRUARY)
- ❖ YOUTH - SWEETHEART DINNER (FEBRUARY)
- ❖ YOUTH - SUNRISE EASTER SERVICE (APRIL 1)
- ❖ YOUTH - EASTER BASKETS FOR DOVE
- ❖ YOUTH - THANKSGIVING BASKETS (NOV 18)
- ❖ YOUTH - COOKIE WALK FUNDRAISER (DECEMBER)

Volunteers are vital to allow the continued enjoyment of the events.

A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board across from the church office. Please consider leading at least one event for 2018.

If you have any questions before committing, please call or email Shirley, for Adult, or Susan for youth, events.

Shirley Zimmerman	(217) 875-7302	sdzcomm27@comcast.net	Adult Ministry
Susan Daley	(217) 855-2472	sdaley2@gmail.com	Youth Ministry

Your participation is greatly appreciated.



# LOGOS

## LOGOS THEMES 2018

### JANUARY

**3 – NO LOGOS**  
 10 – Fiesta!  
 17 – Strikes and Spares  
 24 – Renaissance Night  
 31 – Rise and Shine

JANUARY 2018						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

### FEBRUARY 2018

### FEBRUARY

**7 – NO LOGOS**  
 14 – Ash Wednesday  
 21 – thgiN sdrawkcaB  
 28 – Taking Flight

FEBRUARY 2018						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

### MARCH

7 – Spuds 'n Suds  
**14 – NO LOGOS**  
 21 – Dinner on the Move  
 28 – Happy Easter

MARCH 2018						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

### APRIL 2018

### APRIL

**4 – FINAL Banquet**

APRIL 2018						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

**LOGOS meets 4:15 – 6:45pm, unless otherwise noted.**

## FFDO

First Friday Dinner Out will meet at Il Forno on January 5 at 6 pm.

## Mitten Tree

*Our Mitten Tree in Fellowship Hall was loaded with warm gifts for the DOVE Christmas baskets. This tree collected 74 pairs of gloves and mittens, 50 scarves, 121 hats, and one pair of earmuffs. 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!*

# Happenings

## FFDO

Il Forno  
Saturday,  
January 6  
6:00 pm



## God's Busy Hands

Tuesdays  
1:00 - 3:00 pm



God's Busy Hands

## Choir

Wednesdays  
7:00 pm



Sing With Us

First Ringers  
Thursdays  
5:45 pm



Happy  
New  
Year

Admin Meeting  
Monday, January 8  
5:30 pm

Council of Ministry  
Teams  
Monday, January 15  
5:30 pm



# January 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.

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

20. Mark & Jeanette Flenner

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

## Remember to Pray for and Visit Members

### Who are in Assisted Living, Nursing Homes or Shut-ins

#### **Primrose Retirement Community**

Marian Simpson—Room 130

#### **Randell Residence**

Carolyn Jones—Room 216

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

Alice Roach

#### **Hickory Point Christian Village**

Al Wilson—Room 202

Patricia Weiss—Room 325

Claude Young—Room 409

#### **Evergreen Place**

Mary Lou Phipps—Room 208

#### **Fair Haven Christian Village**

Lois Shelton—Room 113

#### **McKinley Court**

Beverly Capshaw -Room 108

#### **Lincolnshire Place**

Marie Bauer—Room 213



# First Church Sunday Morning

	Date	9:00 AM Service	11:00 AM Service
 <b>LITURGISTS</b>	January 7	Chuck Zweck	
	January 14	Jodi Carpenter	
	January 21	Sharon Burbes	
	January 28	Melinda Redman	
	January 7	Tom & Betty Frankhauser	
	January 14	Clarence & Carolyn Elliott	
	January 21	Mark & Jeanette Flenner	
	January 28		
	January 7	Frank & Shelly Smith	Missy Boldizar
	January 14	Bill & Alice Huebner	Sandy Harmison
	January 21	Kristin Hargrove	Joe Moretti/Maureen Ruski
	January 28	Kristin Hargrove	Betty Wheatley
	January 7	Don & Dee Wenneker, Tom & Paula Cordts	Fonseca Family
	January 14	Robert & Penny Butts, Sheila Mannweiler, Ev Kuhn	Parise Band
	January 21	Joe & Carol Robertson, Mike & Toni Longstreet	Joe Moretti/Maureen Ruski
	January 28	Darla Weltmer, Martha Crookshank, Chuck Zweck, Dave Carpenter	Betty Wheatley

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



# January Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-Anon 8:00 AA	3	4 2:15 Girl Scouts	5 6:00 MCYP	6
7 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellow ship Hour 11:00 Contem- porary	8 5:30 Admin  7:00 Property Meeting	9 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-Anon 8:00 AA	10 4:15-6:45 LOGOS 7:00 Choir Practice	11 2:15 Girl Scouts  5:45 1st Ringers	12 6:00 MCYP	13
14 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellow ship Hour 11:00 Contem- porary	15 5:30 Council Of Ministry Teams	16 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-Anon 8:00 AA	17 4:15-6:45 LOGOS 7:00 Choir Practice	18 2:15 Girl Scouts  5:45 1st Ringers	19 6:00 MCYP	20
21 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellow ship Hour 11:00 Contem- porary	22	23 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-Anon 8:00 AA	24 4:15-6:45 LOGOS 7:00 Choir Practice	25 2:15 Girl Scouts  5:45 1st Ringers	26 6:00 MCYP	27
28 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellow ship Hour 11:00 Contem- porary	29	30 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-Anon 8:00 AA	31 4:15-6:45 LOGOS 7:00 Choir Practice			



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

## 2017 Church Goals

Your Council of Ministry Teams has approved the following 3 goals for 2017:

### **2017 Church Goals**

Living into who are (or have become). The reality is we are a “small church” and need to celebrate what we can do, let go of what we can’t do and look at organizing/working together in a way that is supported by our true size, utilizing our resources in the best possible way.

- 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 – Develop new Outreach ministries to Decatur and the surrounding area.
- Goal No. 3 - To come to understand for ourselves, and be able to articulate to others, who Jesus is to us, both as individuals and as a community.

The current status of these goals is as follows:

- Goal 1 - New church Constitution and By-Laws presented to congregation on October 22, 2017
- Goal 2 – Outreach Ministry Team Co-Leaders, Joe Moretti and Gary Baker, have developed a new plan for Outreach..
- Goal 3 – Pastor Ryan is crafting a First Church-specific study that would include small groups that meet for a series of six weeks or so to discuss a specific topic while getting to know each other more intimately. A Six Week Journey of Faith” will take place during lent, beginning February 14