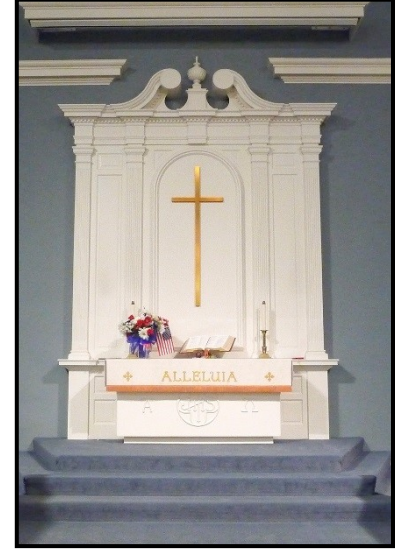


# Congregational Comments



Vol. 24 No. 1: January 2019

## Important Contacts in the Church

**Pastor:** Rev. Jan Johnson, 309-267-3260  
Email: [PastorJan@firstchurchdecatur.org](mailto:PastorJan@firstchurchdecatur.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  
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## Church Contact Information:

3465 N. MacArthur Rd.  
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



## Pastor Jan Johnson

Happy New Year! May the coming year be kind and generous to each of you!

Romans 12: 9-21 Marks of the True Christian Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for

what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Since this is January and many folks are making New Year's Resolutions, let's begin our new year off in a good way! There is a little booklet called The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Churches and the converse of that is on the flip side: The 7 Habits of Highly Ineffective Churches. Let's take a look at our church and see which Habits we need to break and which ones we need to do better! We begin with the Effective Church side of the booklet:

- A. Strive for excellence in service to Christ**
- B. Cultivate a spirit of innovation and experimentation**
- C. Take the initiative to build relationships with people and groups in the wider community beyond your congregation**
- D. Accept responsibility for mistakes, learn from them, and in all things, let grace abound**
- E. Always be prepared to give an account of the hope that is within you**
- F. Be willing to let people go in order to stay focused on your core mission**
- G. Err on the side of Generosity**

And now for the Ineffective church side of the booklet:

- A. Elevate mediocrity to a spiritual discipline**
- B. Take no risks**
- C. Practice the following evangelism strategy: If they want us, they know where to find us**
- D. Blame early and often**
- E. Always be prepared to make an account of the excuses that are within you**
- F. The job of the Pastor(s) and staff is to keep everyone, meaning church members, happy**
- G. Spend as little money as possible**

As your church looks for a new pastor, which type of church do you think a pastor would want to come and be with; minister with? Obviously, the Effective Church! While there is no perfect church (or perfect pastors) a pastor will be drawn to the churches that exhibit most of the first group of 'habits'. But do not despair! If First Church has Ineffective habits, now is the time to change them! From what I have seen, the members of First Church are more the Effective Habits Church than the Ineffective Habits Church, but we can always do better!

It's a new year! Let's make 2019 the best year yet!  
Blessings for a Happy and Healthy 2019! Jan

# Information

## God's Busy Hands



God's Busy Hands

The "Crew" of our group began on October 8th 2008, and according to my records, we have made over 3200 plus blankets, 50 shawls, Betty Wheatley stocking hats, so many we lost count of them. So we have been very busy, and enjoyed every minute.

Now we are starting new lists, beginning soon, with new dates of October 2018. We will continue to give them away for free, NEVER to be sold. Hopefully we will continue to do well. Thanks to all who support us in our endeavors.

Sincerely, Carolyn Elliott



## Women's Fellowship Tea

Women's Fellowship will host a Valentine Tea on Friday, February 15th at 1:00 in Fellowship Hall. Save the date and plan to join us that day. We need to elect Officers at that meeting also.

For further information contact [Lmweltmer@juno.com](mailto:Lmweltmer@juno.com)

877-7008

Darla



# Adult Progressive Dinner

## ADULT PROGRESSIVE DINNER



**Betty Wheatley and Shirley Sutton enjoying the  
appetizers**

Thirty one festive church goers attended the Adult Progressive Dinner on Saturday night, December 8. Our gracious hosts for the appetizer course were Bill and Alice Huebner, and delicious desserts were served at Tom and Paula Cordts. All enjoyed the wonderful food, conversation, and beautiful Christmas decorations in each home. Thank you to our hosts for this most enjoyable evening together with our First Church family.

Photos by Dave Carpenter and Bill Huebner



**Bob Bunselmeyer serving up the  
beef**



**Look at all the desserts!!!**

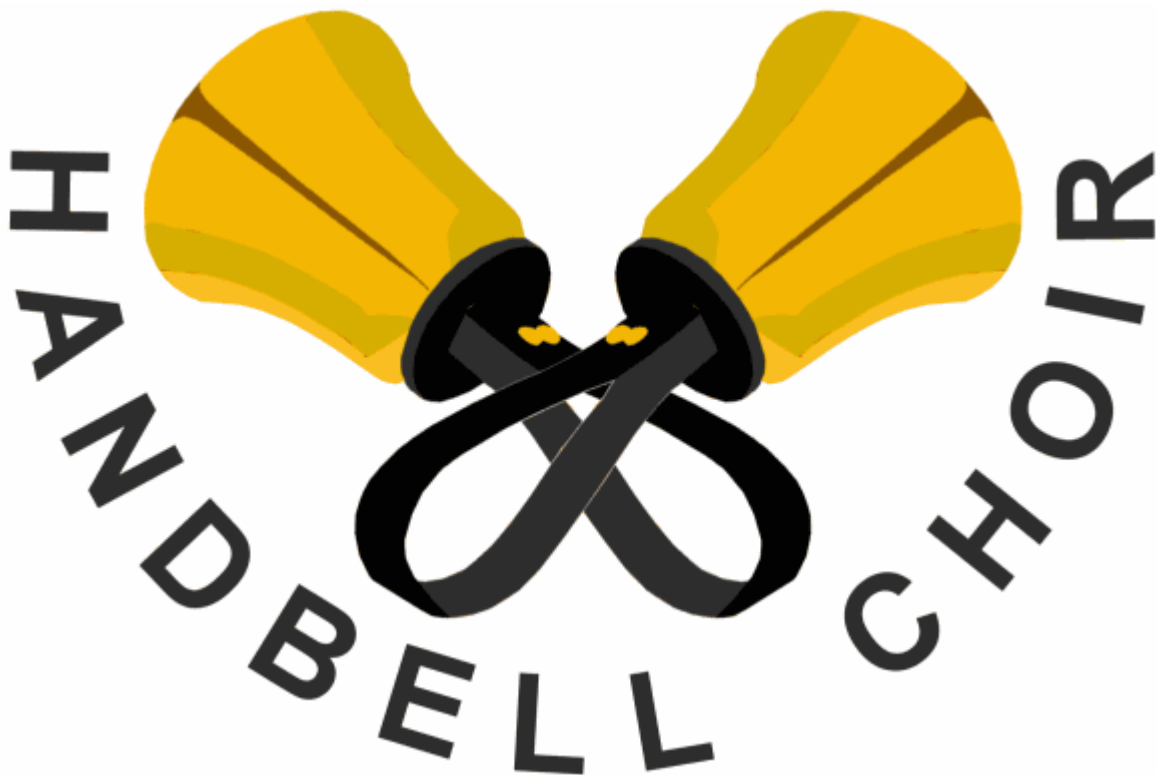
# New Bell Choir Director

## Congregation.....

Hurray, hurray! If you haven't heard, we just hired a new bell choir director as Bette retired. His name is Jaylen Davis. He is a Sophomore Vocal Music Education major at Millikin University. Jaylen has experience working with youth ( ages 2-20 ) as counselor and leadership positions in summer camp, and also experience directing older generations from 25 to 60 as music director in his former church for 3 years. Jaylen is excited to be working with our church and his enthusiasm is contagious. He's planning on bringing a few friends from school to help get our bells started as well. When he starts February 1st, please introduce yourself, he's very friendly; but be careful.... he may try and recruit you!

Worship music chairmen,

Darby Mitchell and Dee Wenneker







# Elevator/Lift

## The Church's New Elevator/Lift is Up and Running

After years of talking and planning, the church has a new elevator/lift in operation. We would like to thank everyone in the church for work and contributions to make this possible.

We would especially like to thank the following people who worked on the elevator/lift.

- Elevator Planning Group— Bill Huebner, Joe Moretti, Gary Baker and Willis Parker. This group looked at the previous plans, talked to vendor and decided on the new location. They then got a design and quote for the system.
- Property Team— Joe Robertson and Gary Baker. Property took over the project once we had a quote and plan.
- Our Congregation— The congregation then supported the project with the money needed to pay for the elevator/lift.
- Brandon Janvrin (member of congregation) and the Jones & Sullivan Enterprises, Inc. who designed and built the elevator/lift.



**Bonnie Ruecker, one of the first people to use the new elevator/lift**

# Announcements



## What will Heaven be like?

The Exploring Christian Faith study group will be starting our next study session on Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> 2019.. With a lesson book titled Heaven from the Life Guide Bible Studies collection. Our group meets almost every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. in the choir room; we'd be happy to have you join us for this study about Heaven or to stop by to get acquainted.

We're a group that has been meeting for years. We're open and respectful of the fact that we're all exploring our Christian faith, with our own thoughts about our faith. So come and explore with us!

## FFDO

FFDO will meet at Mi Pueblito at 6:00 on January 4. Give me a call if you will be joining us.

Sandy Harmison



CoolClips.com



# Finance Notes

## **OCTOBER 2018 FINANCIAL REPORT**

	<u>Oct. 18</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$17,420.92	\$174,209.20
Budget Expense	\$17,269.15	\$172,691.52
Income	\$17,093.25	\$169,736.52
Expenses	\$15,635.78	\$160,764.93

## **NOVEMBER 2018 FINANCIAL REPORT**

	<u>Nov. 18</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$17,420.92	\$191,630.12
Budget Expense	\$17,269.15	\$189,960.65
Income	\$14,731.14	\$184,467.66
Expenses	\$12,190.88	\$172,955.81



# Happenings

## FFDO

Mt. Pueblito

January 4

6:30 pm



## God's Busy Hands

Tuesdays

1:00 - 3:00 pm



God's Busy Hands

## Admin Meeting

Monday, January 21

5:30 pm

## Council of Ministry Teams

Monday, January 21

6:30 pm

## Choir

Wednesdays

7:00 pm



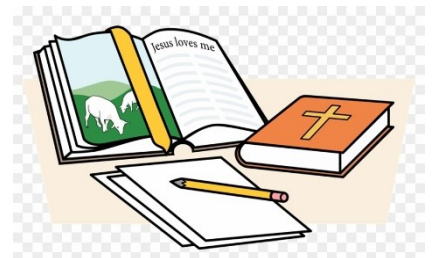
Sing With Us

## Exploring Christian Faith Study Group

Sundays at

10:30 am

Choir Room



# 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.


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

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

- 20. Mark & Jeanette Flenner



# First Church Sunday Morning

	Date	9:00 AM Service	11:00 AM Service
 <b>LITURGISTS</b>	January 6	Ellen Starace	
	January 13	Melinda Redman	
	January 20	Penny Butts	
	January 27	Chuck Zweck	
	January 6	Poinsettias	
	January 13	Debbie Beal	
	January 20	Mark & Jeanette Flenner	
	January 27	Frank & Shelly Smith	
	January 6	Dave & Judi Carpenter	
	January 13	Ellen Starace	
	January 20	Martha Crookshank	
	January 27	Mike & Toni Longstreet	
	January 6	Ted & Darby Mitchell, Ev & Shirley Kuhn	
	January 13	Jim & Jodi Baldwin, Dave Carpenter, Darla Weltmer	
	January 20	Frank & Shelly Smith, Tom & Paula Cordts	
	January 27	Don & Dee Wennekers, Brandon & Valerie Janvrin	

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



# January Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b> <b>1:00 God's Busy Hands</b> <b>7:00 Al-Anon</b> <b>8:00 AA</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> <b>6:30 Bible Study</b>	<b>4</b> <b>6:00 MCYP</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6 9:00</b> <b>Traditional</b> <b>10:00 Fellow</b> <b>ship Hour</b> <b>11:00 Con-</b> <b>temporary</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> <b>1:00 God's Busy Hands</b> <b>7:00 Al-Anon</b> <b>8:00 AA</b>	<b>9</b> <b>7:00 Choir Practice</b>	<b>10</b> <b>5:30 PFLAG</b> <b>6:30 Bible Study</b>	<b>11</b> <b>6:00 MCYP</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>13 9:00</b> <b>Traditional</b> <b>10:00 Fellow</b> <b>ship Hour</b> <b>11:00 Con-</b> <b>temporary</b>	<b>14</b> <b>7:00 Property Meeting</b>	<b>15</b> <b>1:00 God's Busy Hands</b> <b>7:00 Al-Anon</b> <b>8:00 AA</b>	<b>16</b> <b>7:00 Choir Practice</b>	<b>17</b> <b>6:30 Bible Study</b>	<b>18</b> <b>6:00 MCYP</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>20 9:00</b> <b>Traditional</b> <b>10:00 Fellow</b> <b>ship Hour</b> <b>11:00 Con-</b> <b>temporary</b>	<b>21</b> <b>5:30 Admin</b> <b>6:30 Council Of Ministry Teams</b>	<b>22</b> <b>1:00 God's Busy Hands</b> <b>7:00 Al-Anon</b> <b>8:00 AA</b>	<b>23</b> <b>7:00 Choir Practice</b>	<b>24</b> <b>6:30 Bible Study</b>	<b>25</b> <b>6:00 MCYP</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>27 9:00</b> <b>Traditional</b> <b>10:00 Fellow</b> <b>ship Hour</b> <b>11:00 Con-</b> <b>temporary</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> <b>1:00 God's Busy Hands</b> <b>7:00 Al-Anon</b> <b>8:00 AA</b>	<b>30</b> <b>7:00 Choir Practice</b>	<b>31</b> <b>6:30 Bible Study</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**

Working on goals for 2019, let one of the church officers know if you have an idea for a goal.