

Congregational Comments

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Pastor: Rev. Jan Johnson: 309-267-3260

Email: RevJanUCC@sbcglobal.net

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

**Dear Members and Friends
of First Congregational
United Church of Christ,**

The words thank you are not enough to express our gratitude for wonderful worship service, retirement gift and fellowship brunch afterwards. Thank you for all of you coming and sharing in this special day - it was wonderful!! Thank you too, for your many wonderful cards with kind messages and gifts. Thank you for all your many kind well wishes for our retirement. Retirement had seemed so distant for so long a time that its hard to believe it has arrived. We were surprised and humbled by the wonderful monetary gift from all of you. We are considering ideas for this wonderful retirement gift you gave us. When make our selection – we will remember all of you fondly, your love, your smiles, your work, your faith and give thanks for our relationships and time together. You will be in our hearts. You are the best!! May God continue to bless each of you, your leaders and your new pastor and the ministry of First Congregational United Church of Christ as you begin this new chapter of opportunity together.

With our love and best wishes,

Pastor Dave and Bobbie Taylor

THANK YOU

Thank you to all the members of First Church for all the cards and prayers for all the blood tests and iron transfusions. Thank you for both me and Clarence. We truly appreciate each and everyone.

Clarence and Carolyn Elliott



Meet Rev. Jan Johnson Designated Pastor Effective July 1, 2016

Rev. Jan Johnson is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, having been ordained in 1980 at First Congregational UCC in Webster Groves, MO. She has served churches in St. Louis, MO, Pekin, IL, was Chaplain at Pekin Memorial Hospital for 10 years, and has been an Intentional Interim Minister since 2000. She has been a Designated Pastor for 18 months, taking her husband's place at Pekin Congregational Church UCC toward the end of his life.

Rev. Johnson has particular interests and training in Calling and Caring Ministry, Medical Ethics, Crime Scene Investigation, and has been a Certified Christian Education, member of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, and member of the College of Chaplains and has Certification in Complicated Bereavement through the New York Diocese of the Catholic church.

Rev. Johnson has 2 adult children living in Pekin and Mackinaw, and a 4 year old granddaughter. She lives in Peoria with her 5 kitties: Miss Kitty and Boots, Casey and Lemonade, and Sinatra. She enjoys knitting and crocheting, writing murder mystery stories, crafts, music, and photography.

Beginning, June 13, the church office hours will be 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. We welcome our new Office Manager, Peggy Mennel-Crosby.

Rev. Jan Johnson joins us on **July 1** as our Designated Pastor. Her normal in-the-office hours will be 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, Her other hours will include visitations, meetings and other duties that arise. **Beginning July 1**, Jan can be contacted at 309-267-3260 or RevJanUCC@sbcglobal.net.

From the Designated Pastor....

As I am preparing for my time with you beginning July 1, I am also listening to the horrific news reports of the devastation in Orlando, Florida's Pulse nightclub. So many young lives cut short by a madman! My prayers and spiritual moments are brutally interrupted by this man's pain and the chaos that pain has wreaked in a place where he was welcomed and accepted, no questions asked.

I offer my prayers on behalf of those lives lost and all who loved them. My prayers are also for the man who created the pain. His parents and his child have lost someone they loved also.

When these shootings occur – and given the general climate of today's world we should be preparing ourselves for more of the same – we tend to get all torn up and stirred up inside. That's only natural. The next natural thing to do for people of faith is to pray and ask God for guidance in deciding what God wants us to do.

Wringing our hands in desperation does nothing to help the situation nor to offer God's Peace and Agape to the world which is standing around horrified and wringing their hands! We are followers of Christ and need to act like it! Love is the order of the day. Not Eros, but Agape. We have the greatest power in the universe at our disposal. Hoarding it is not an option.

So as we gather as a country, as a world, as a culture, as a Church, let us remember the Scripture which says loud and clear: 2 Corinthians 4: 8-12 ⁸We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.

¹¹For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh.

¹²So death is at work in us, but life in you.

God's direction is never, EVER, hate-filled or destructive or chaotic or demeaning or prejudicial or mean. No, the fruit, the proof of God's Spirit are goodness, kindness, patience, faithfulness, self-control, love, joy, peace, gentleness. Against such there is no law!

This month we celebrate our Independence as a country. There are several who will not be celebrating with us. Perhaps we need to remember where we came from and how we got here as a country; what we stand for and why it is important to our national security. We must do our part, as faithful Christian Americans, to help stop the insanity. Wave the Flag, the higher the better! But LIVE what the Flag stands for: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.

Continued on next page



Congratulations to Paul and Ruth DeBruine

On June 8, Paul and Ruth celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. Join everyone in congratulating them on this great event.

I know that I have missed important events for the membership of First Church. However, I need to know about these events before I can put them in the newsletter. Therefore, please let me know about any important event in your lives at least a month before the date and I will do my best to get them in the newsletter. Pictures will also help.

Newsletter Editor

Those who died in Orlando, Sandy Hook, Columbine, California, Fort Hood, and all the rest, died living their lives in the assurance that they were in a safe place. So far they have died in vain. Perhaps this time we will, as a world, live differently. Perhaps this time we will listen to that still, small, voice of God directing us to be bold in our faith and proclamation of Christ's love for all people.

Spend some time in prayer in these days and listen for God's directing voice!

Be at Peace,
Jan Johnson

BIBLE STUDY

The God is Still Speaking Bible Study will begin its discussion of "What's the Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?" by Martin Thielen on June 26 with the first chapter. Will proceed one chapter at a time. A schedule is posted on the bulletin board in room C of the chapters to be discussed each week so that you can join us at any time. The book includes 20 chapters, so it will take us a while to complete the entire book. Feel free to drop in and join in the discussion.

FIRST FRIDAY DINNER OUT

First Friday Dinner Out will be held on July 8 (due to the holiday week-end). We will be meeting at the Beach House at 6:00. Please come and join the fun and fellowship. Let Sandy Harmison know by July 7 at noon if you are able to attend.

First Church on Facebook: No matter how little or how much you use Facebook, you can participate in spreading the Good News of what we are about and what we do at FCUCC! Go to [facebook.com/firstcongregationaluccdecaturn](https://www.facebook.com/firstcongregationaluccdecaturn) and "like" us.



VBS

VBS 2016 is fast approaching at First Church! Hope your summer calendar includes this event on Sunday, July 24 – Thursday, July 28 from 6:00-8:30, with the preschool children having the option of leaving at 8:05 and dinner available for the volunteers at 5:15. Plans are almost completed for another action-packed, fun-filled week. Many of you have already committed to help, but we are still in need an Adult leader for Spotlight VBS (videographer/photographer); a couple of Crew Leaders and Assistants to shuttle the children through the events each evening; Registration; and help with set-up before and take-down after. Please let us know as soon as possible where you will help.

Our theme is *Cave Quest – FOLLOWING JESUS – THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD*. We will meet Sal, Mawtha, Radar, Olivia and Ray as they help us with our daily Bible Point, Story and Key Verse. We will have an over-the-top underground adventure that will ground kids (and adults) in the rock-solid foundation of God's and love, a love that takes us through life's dark times. THANKS! Marsha Mower

2016 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 - 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.



Bobbie and Dave




PASTOR DAVE'S AND BOBBIE'S RETIREMENT PARTY—JUNE 5, 2016




On Sunday, June 5, 2016

First Congregational, United Church of Christ celebrated a Service of Farewell for Pastor David Taylor

After the service, there was a party for everyone in the Fellowship Hall to celebrate both Dave and Bobbie's retirement.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
9:00 Traditional Service 11:00 Contemporary Service			
3 Pastoral Card Sale	4	5 1-3:00 God's Busy Hands. 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	6
10	11 5:00 Admin	12  1-3:00 God's Busy Hands. 7:00 Al-anon	13 Playmate Summer
17 10:00 FRB Pie Auction	18 7:00 Church Council	19 1-3:00 God's Busy Hands. 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	20
24 Vacation Bible School	22 VBS	26 VBS 1-3:00 God's Busy Hands. 7:00 Al-anon	27 VBS
31 Indian Visitors FRB Speaker			

Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2
7	8	9
es → flight	14 → 15	16
21 1:15 Book Club VBS Set up →	22	23
28 VBS	29	30
		

What, you may ask, is a Designated Pastor?

In the changing landscape of ministry, new situations in congregations share the need for wider understanding of leadership needs in times of transition. There are times and situations when called or interim pastors are not always available or appropriate for the needs of an emerging role in the life of congregations.

The term Designated Pastor has been adopted to be used in situations where a congregation is engaged in a renewal ministry which may be limited to a particular time frame or a specific purpose to engage the congregation's ministry. This term is to be used only in specific situations.

Interim Ministry and Designated Ministry must be clearly distinguished. The effective and ethical practice of Interim Ministry rests upon the principle of the Interim Minister not allowing him/herself to be considered as a candidate for a called position. A Designated Pastor is **contracted** for a specific purpose which may lead, after a specified time and careful discernment, to being called to serve in that ministerial role.

One situation that might lead a congregation along this path is, a Designated Pastor could help the congregation implement or develop its plans for ministry, focus on a redevelopment strategy, spend a designated period of time addressing a particular aspect of its life or discern its future. This falls in line with the goal work we have committed to in 2016 here at First Church. It also allows for the "called pastoral leader" process to run in parallel, shortening the overall "search" timeline. The Associate Conference Minister assists as the church discerns the need and develops a plan for a Designated Pastoral Position and will also assist the church for the "called pastoral leader" using the search and call processes of the United Church of Christ.

A Contract for the Designated Pastor would include: the specific length of the designated term, goals for the designated term, contractual terms that financially and spiritually support the position. In our situation the Designated Pastor will serve in a full-time capacity, providing all the things we would normally expect from a pastor (preaching, worship leadership, sacraments, weddings, funerals, pastoral care, visitation, resourcing ministries and committees), in addition to helping us with our goals and discernment of what God is calling us to do and be at First Church.

We hope this information helps in your understanding of a Designated Pastor.



FIRST CHURCH
FOODS RESOURCE BANK
GROWING PROJECT

OUR CORN CROP -- Our Foods Resource Bank growing project is underway. Our 5-acre corn crop stands about 4 feet tall. The corn is growing fast with these warm summer days, but it needs some rain.

PIE AUCTION – This year we are “growing” pies for our FRB project and auctioning them to the highest bidder between church services one Sunday a month. Our next auction is **Sunday, July 17** and pie baker Sharon Burbes will have a coconut cream pie for live auction. Be there! Thanks to pie baker Paula Cordts for her pies for the June auction. Thus far, our pie auctions have generated \$130 to help with the expenses for our FRB growing project.

GUESTS FROM INDIA – First Church will welcome visitors from FRB food security programs in India on **Sunday, July 31**. Noni is a farmer from Patharkmah Village and Balo is a program coordinator with North East India Committee on Relief and Development. Both women will report on the accomplishments made in their communities through the FRB programs. They will be accompanied by FRB staffer Rachel Brink. Please join us to welcome them to Illinois.

If you would like to contribute to the expenses of the 2016 FRB Growing Project corn crop, you may use the envelopes in the pews or mark another envelope accordingly. Please make your check payable to First Congregational UCC. Proceeds of this crop will support a sustainable food program in the developing world in a country that our church selects to help people in some of the poorest parts of our world learn to feed themselves with dignity and pride.

From Your Church President.....

I'm happy to report things continue to move forward at a rapid pace at First Church! We have been so blessed to have all the many pieces fall into place in a timely manner. Thanks be to God!

We celebrated in worship and fellowship with Pastor Dave and Bobbie Taylor on June 5 as they retire and move on to the next phase of their lives. The worship service was filled with the Holy Spirit and the meal was great. Thanks to all of you who had a part in making this day a huge success.

Admin Ministry has continued to work with our Associate Conference Minister, Tom Norwalk, regarding the proper procedures for our congregation in this time of transition. We have prayerfully considered all our options, seeking to discern God's will for us and finding the "best fit" for our congregation. Admin has hired Rev. Jan Johnson as our Designated Pastor, beginning July 1. Since this is a temporary position, Admin was responsible for the hiring. Per our constitution, when the final candidate is presented for the "called" pastoral position, the congregation elects this person at a special called meeting.

With the hiring of a Designated Pastor, we were able to start the "called pastor" search process much sooner, enabling a Pastoral Search Committee (PSC) to begin working right away. Admin worked towards getting the PSC engaged, prayerfully reflecting on the personal qualities and attributes needed by these persons *and* the guidelines recommended by the UCC *and* presented a list of 7 names, who have agreed to serve, to Church Council for their concurrence. Per our constitution, Church Council called a special meeting of the congregation on June 26 at 10:00 a.m. for the purpose of electing a PSC. The following names were placed into nomination: Don Wenneker, chair; Jeanette Flenner; Ev Kuhn; Chris Leman; Devon Moretti; Peggy Ruff; Terry Stoa; (Marsha Mower, President - would serve as an ex-officio/non-voting member, as recommended by our Association/Conference guidelines). *(At the time of this writing, the meeting had not yet taken place, but I am confident the PSC was elected.)* As a reminder, our constitution calls for a minimum of 7 members but no more than 9 and the right of nomination from the floor shall not be abridged. We felt with our smaller church numbers, 7 members is a good size committee. It would be our intention if nominations came from the floor, those names would be taken back under consideration by Admin and Church Council. However, we are confident we have a good cross-section of people, representing all aspects of the congregation and church life, covered by the names placed into nomination.

Continued on next page

Peggy Mennel-Crosby joined us on June 13 as our new Office Manager. We welcome her to our First Church family and are blessed by the many gifts she brings to us. A HUGE thank-you to Chuck Zweck for serving in the interim and transitioning the work to Peggy.

The four goals that were approved for First Church this year are moving back to the forefront and work will continue on all of them. These goals can be found on another page of this newsletter.

Many of you have shared thoughts, ideas and suggestions and I encourage you to continue doing so. Thank you for your patience, prayers and support in the days, weeks and months ahead. God bless each and every one of you!

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. I hope you join me in praying for the wisdom to “listen” for the plans God has for us and to do our “listening” with an ear open to His will, not our own.

Marsha Mower, Church President

PROPERTY MINISTRY

Thank you to all who helped with the Spring Clean-Up day, Saturday, June 18th. Jim Baldwin, Jody Baldwin, Robby Moore, Kathy Moore, Mark Flenner, Gary Baker, Dave Mahr, Willis Parker, Carol Robertson, Joe Robertson.

MAY 2016 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>May 16</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$18,431.00	\$82,155.00
Budget Expense	\$17,971.56	\$89,857.80
Income	\$19,754.44	\$89,138.24
Expenses	\$12,527.19	\$79,474.14



PEGGY MENNEL-CROSBY

Peggy Mennel-Crosby joined us on June 13 as our new Office Manager. We welcome her to our First Church family and are blessed by the many gifts she brings to us. A HUGE thank-you to Chuck Zweck for serving in the interim and transitioning the work to Peggy.

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

Primrose Retirement Community

Claude Young—Room 228

Lois Shelton—Room 132

Keystone

Carolyn Jones—Room 216

Vonderlieth Living Center, Mt. Pulaski, IL

Alice Roach

Fair Havens Christian Home

Al Wilson—Room 425

Everygreen Place

Mary Lou Phipps— Room 333





MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Scovill Mobile Zoo coming to visit on August 10th at 6:30 pm!

Join us for an interesting encounter!





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

1. Clayton Flies
4. David Brown
5. Joe Seitz
6. Shirley Kuhn
Nancy Leoucis
7. Robert Blackwell
Gerald Ruff
Darla Weltmer
9. Aiden Miller
13. Christina Clark
15. Carl Jacobs
Charles Zweck
16. Albert Wilson
19. Lindsay Malone
21. Ellen Whitrock
23. Zoey Clark
26. Hayley Bunselmeyer
Alexis Fankhauser
27. Sharon Burbes
28. Lois Shelton
31. Jonathan Brownfield

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!

3. Dale & Beverly Capshaw
7. Harold & Sandy Harmison
Jerome & Elizabeth
Scherer
9. Christopher & Amy Leman
19. Mark & Melinda Bunselmeyer
24. Nicholas & Sally Lauer
25. Robert & Carol Blackwell
Richard & Sheila
Mannweiler
27. Kelly & Christen Cantrell



FIRST SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

JULY 3

LITURGIST: Dee Wenneker

FLOWERS:

COFFEE: Gerry & Peggy Ruff

USHERS/GREETER:

JULY 10

LITURGIST: Judi Carpenter

FLOWERS:

COFFEE: Todd & Jennie
Wernecke

USHERS/GREETER:

JULY 17

LITURGIST: Sharon Burbes

FLOWERS: Kathy Richardson

COFFEE: Clarence & Carolyn
Elliott

USHERS/GREETER:

JULY 24

LITURGIST: Darla Weltmer

FLOWERS: Don Merritt

COFFEE: Ted & Darby Mitchell

USHERS/GREETER:

JULY 31

LITURGIST: Chuck Zweck

FLOWERS: Don & Debbie Moster

COFFEE: Kristin Hargrove

USHERS/GREETER:

SECOND SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

JULY 3

USHER/GREETER: Mark &
Jeanette Flenner

REFRESHMENTS: Mark &
Jeanette Flenner

JULY 10

USHER/GREETER: Wes
Pietsch

REFRESHMENTS: Wes Pietsch

JULY 17

USHER/GREETER: Roby Voyles
& Shirley Zimmerman

REFRESHMENTS: Roby Voyles
& Shirley Zimmerman

JULY 24

USHER/GREETER: Praise Band

REFRESHMENTS: Missy
Boldizar

JULY 31

USHER/GREETER: Betty
Wheatley

REFRESHMENTS: Betty
Wheatley



Playmates News

Our first session of Summer Flight in June was "Let's Get Growing". The children learned about how plants grow, including the little creatures that help along the way. They got to observe (and sometimes, manhandle) earthworms and pretend to be bees, pollinating flowers.



Our next session, Mini-Monets, is
July 12 - 14