

Congregational Comments

Vol. 20 No 6: June 2015

Pastor: Rev. Dave Taylor

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 Fax: 877-9665

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

11:15-12:00 am Sunday School



Our Mission is to worship God,
Welcome all who seek God, and
Express our faith in our actions.



Pastor Dave Taylor

FROM THE PASTOR

PRAYING OUR EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES

How often do we take time to reflect upon the experiences of our everyday lives while gently asking the question, "God, how and where were you with me today?" Too often we rush through

our day and headlong into bed without breaking stride. Perhaps we may not live the rushed life, but we simply live our days without giving much thought to prayer or God. But how much we could learn if we began the practice of daily reflection.

When we examine our daily experience with a quiet and prayerful heart, often we become aware of occasions when we are being blessed and nurtured by God without knowing it. Perhaps a kind word from a stranger or friend gave us hope or delight, or something beautiful caught our eye or ear. Perhaps a task well done brought a satisfying sense of using our gifts to do God's will, or we found ourselves reaching out to someone in love and care.

When we recall such moments, our natural response will be gratitude. As we savor the blessing once again, it continues to nourish us and give us life. This experience of gratitude and renewed vitality can be an important indicator that we are living "in sync" with God's desires for our life.

Of equal importance are our experiences of our being "out of sorts" - those moments when we feel drained and anxious, disconnected from people, when we act in ways that make us apologize for "not being myself." These moments also are important to notice and hold, and can help us to recognize those activities and conditions that may be out of line with God's desires. An important service to the church or the community, if it continues to drain all your energy and spirit, may not be the service God is asking you to perform. Or perhaps the Holy Spirit is encouraging you to attend to other dimensions of your life, such as family relationships or recreation.

Over time, the practice of daily reflection can help us to become more aware of the presence of God in even the most insignificant experiences of life, and to discern how the Holy Spirit is encouraging us to live ways that enable us to give and receive love more

freely, to glorify and enjoy God, and to use our energy for the building up of Christ's realm.

We invite you to join us in worship at 9:00 AM Sundays Traditional Service and 11:00 AM for our Contemporary Service. Join us at 10:00 AM for delicious treats and great fellowship in Fellowship Hall. Come explore faith education opportunities. Together we come to learn and experience God's truth and love for our lives.

May God's blessings be with you,

Pastor Dave

THANK YOU – THANK YOU

I want to express my thanks to all of you who live the Spirit of Christ through our ministry here at First Congregational. You are making a holy difference through your love and faith.

We extend a special thanks to our choir members and their director and organist, Laurie Matheson; and to our handbell choir members and their director, Betty Fankhauser. We extend a special thanks to the Praise Band members, Tech Crew, and Praise Band Director, Rick Boldizar. **You have all done well!!! THANK YOU so much for sharing your gifts and faith with us!**

Pastor Dave

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!



Congratulations and best wishes to all of our graduates as you begin a new chapter in your life. We're proud of you! May God continue to bless you in your future plans.

Our Congratulations to Devon Moretti for earning her High School diploma as well as earning an Associates Degree from Richland Community College.

Well Done Devon – we're proud of you!!!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

We thank all of our Sunday School, LOGOS and Confirmation teachers and helpers for helping our students learn more about their faith. We also want say thank you to our families, parents, grandparents and students for making faith a priority in your life and in the life of your youth. Our thanks to all our church family for remembering our Christian Education program in your prayers and through your caring support with time, talents and money. A big thank you to the leaders and planners of our Church School, LOGOS and Confirmation programs!! You make God's word and love come alive to our students.

As we look forward to the 2015 summer and fall program year and the 2016 winter and spring, we will need great people to assist, teach, and cook for our LOGOS and Church School programs. If you would like to know more about teaching or helping with our Christian Education ministry, please contact Marsha Mower or Carol Robertson, or Pastor Dave.

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

Primrose Retirement Community

Claude Young—Room 228

Hickory Point Christian Village

Mary Lou Phipps— Room 210

Celeste Ritter—Room 304

Imboden Gardens

Harriette Horn—Room120

Keystone

Carolyn Jones—Room 216

Vonderlieth Living Center, Mt. Pulaski, IL

Alice Roach



THANK YOU

The family of Lois Moore would like to thank everyone for their thoughts and prayers during this trying time. We would also like to thank all those who sent cards and who provided food for the meal after her service. For those who planned, prepared, served, and cleaned up afterward, there are no words to express what that meant to us. Thank you First Congregational United Church of Christ for all you have done.

Sandy Harmison

The last few months have been difficult, but the love and support of my church family has been a great comfort. We find peace in knowing that Bob is now at rest. Thank you for the many cards and donations in his memory.

Betty Henry and Family



It's an innovative way to boost attendance

OUR SYMPATHY...

- ◆ **for the family of Bob Henry**, husband of Betty Henry. Bob passed from this life to life eternal on April 17, 2015;
- ◆ **for the family of Bill Crookshank**, husband of Martha Crookshank. Bill passed from this life to life eternal on April 19, 2015;
- ◆ **for the family of Sharon Scheibly**, mother of Christina Clark. Sharon passed from this life to life eternal on April 23, 2015;
- ◆ **for the family of Celeste Ritter**. Celeste passed from this life to life eternal on April 29, 2015.
- ◆ **for the family of Lois Moore**, mother of Sandy Harmison. Lois passed from this life to life eternal on May 2, 2015;
- ◆ **for the family of June Fiddler McGinnis**. June passed from this life to life eternal on May 2, 2015.
- ◆ **for the family of Russ Tiede**, husband of Janet Tiede. Russ passed from this life to life eternal on May 7, 2015;
- ◆ **for the family of Walter Jones**, husband of Carolyn Jones. Walter passed from this life to life eternal on May 14, 2015;

We give thanks for Bob, Bill, Sharon, Celeste, Lois, June, Russ, and Walter's lives and that they with God in life eternal. We pray God's love and support be with their families and friends.

"I am the resurrection and the life; all who believe in me, though they die, yet shall live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." John 11: 25-26

Blessings,

Pastor Dave

VBS 2015 at First Church!

Plans are progressing for this year's VBS program. It promises to be another action-packed, fun-filled week. We are still looking for YOU to help us make it another successful year. Serving as co-directors again this year are Marsha Mower and Maureen Ruski. Several people have already committed to join us and we thank you for volunteering! As we have the past few years, we want to make this a church-wide endeavor, involving as many people and ministries as possible. We are committed to reaching out to children in our church family and the community. So, don't miss out on this opportunity to be involved!

Our theme is *EVEREST - Conquering Challenges with God's Mighty Power*. We will meet Klymer, Cliff, Mallory, Pike and Veddy as they help us with our daily Bible Point, Story and Key Verse. We will have an amazing adventure that will help kids (and adults) explore God's incredible power and love for his children. The dates are Sunday, July 26 – Thursday, July 30 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.

Areas of need include: Adult Leader for Spotlight VBS (videographer/photographer). Preschool Peak needs a couple of Assistants. We also need someone to coordinate and lead Volunteer/Staff Meals, a sound/digital projection tech and a couple of Crew Leaders. We will need help with set-up before and take-down after. Those children who complete 6th grade this school year are invited to join us as Assistant Crew Leaders. We also have "staff spots" for mature and responsible Jr/Sr High youth to assist in the various areas.

Please let us know as soon as possible where you will help.

THANKS! Marsha Mower

	Thu	Fri	Sat
Vacation	4	5	6
2:00 Summer Program	11	12	13
	18 1:15 Book Club	19 Praise Band Event	20
	25	26	27
			

URGENT and IMMEDIATE OFFICE NEEDS

Our office copy machine has been faithful for nearly 10 years, producing approximately 1 1/2 million copies for the varied work and ministry of First Church. It has been “limping along” for several months now, has been awaiting hard-to-find parts for over a month and must be replaced. In addition, computer software updates are needed on the office computers for our financial programs to work and reports to be available. At its May 18 meeting, Church Council approved a motion to spend up to \$8000 for the replacement of the copy machine and any computer software upgrades that are required at the current time, soliciting immediate donations from the congregation and taking the balance from the Reserve Fund, if needed. Please prayerfully consider how YOU can help with this immediate need. Donations should be earmarked for “Office Copier/Software” and can be placed in the offering plate, left in the church office or mailed to the church. Thank you in advance for helping us raise the necessary funds.



APRIL 2015 FINANCIAL REPORT

No April report, we are having problems with the church computer and software.

In Appreciation.....

God Bless our Sunday School Staff here at First Congregational!

It is the end of another school year and on May 17th, the following were recognized for their year long dedication to our children. Katie Slingerland teaching our 1st through 6th grade children, Christina Clark and Susan Daley co-teaching our Preschool through Kindergarden with assistance this year from Mark Bunselmeyer, Debbie Moster, and Carol Robertson. Also, Thank You to Mindy Bunselmeyer and Stacey Carter for the Children's Time Messages. Katy Koyak and Devon Moretti have been our regulars in the Nursery this year.

Congratulations to our 3rd Graders receiving Bibles during the 9:00 service on May 17th: Logan Moster, Cameron Malone, and Sable Roberts. May God Bless you in your journey of faith!

Mark Your Calendar! The Scovill Mobile Zoo will be coming this summer! Join us Monday, June 22nd at 5:15pm for a Hot Dog Dinner followed at 5:45 by an animal presentation.





CHURCH WORK DAY

Keep Saturday, June 13 available for a work day at church. We have a lot of work to do around the church. There is yard work to do, cleaning and waxing of floors and maybe some painting. There is always need for general cleaning of the church.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 13
8:00 TO ?**



**Workers at Last
September's
Work Day**





FIRST CHURCH
FOODS RESOURCE BANK
GROWING PROJECT

It's time to start our 2015 FRB growing project!

This is our **tenth** year to be a part of the Foods Resource Bank program.

As in past years, a church member has donated 5 acres of farmland for the project and has volunteered the equipment and labor to plant, care for, and harvest a corn crop for our project. Now church members have the opportunity to contribute to cover the cost of the input expenses of our corn crop. The proceeds from the harvest will be sent to a Foods Resource Bank sustainable food program that our congregation selects. We will choose from 62 FRB programs supporting families in small villages in 34 countries around the world...growing lasting solutions to hunger! One hundred percent of the money that we send is passed on to the program that we have selected. Nothing is held out for overhead. Our 2014 growing project provided \$7,641.67 to help people in Cambodia.

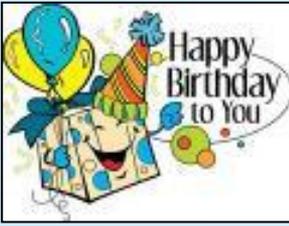
This year's cost to plant our project is \$399 per acre--\$28.50 less than last year's cost (and you thought prices always go up). The breakdown per acre is:

- \$ 138.00 for seed
- 179.00 for fertilizer
- 32.00 for herbicide
- 25.00 for fungicide
- 15.00 for diesel fuel
- 10.00 for crop hail insurance

Therefore, the total amount needed to plant our corn crop this year is \$1995.00. Our current crop is planted. The field is green and getting plenty of moisture.

If you would like to make a donation to help pay the cost of planting this crop, donation envelopes can be found in the pews and may be placed in the offering baskets or delivered to the church office. Please make your check payable to First Congregational UCC, and indicate that it is for our FRB growing project.

Thank you for helping with our Foods Resource Bank growing project which will help people in some of the poorest parts of the world to experience the dignity and pride of feeding themselves and their families.



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

2. Patricia Weiss
Reed Cordts
3. Stacey Carter
6. Mark Flenner
8. June Lindsten
Madeline Mitchell
10. Dee Wenneker
15. Bernice Woodhall
Wallace Lorey
Mary Lou Garfield
19. Harold Harmison
21. Jamie Hill
22. Penny Kotal
23. Ann Stringer
24. William Hickman
25. Allen Gerhold
26. Sue Bunselmeyer
27. Paula Carmichael
30. Bonnie Ruecker

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!

1. William & Alice Huebner
Robby & Kathy Moore
2. Frank & Shelly Smith
7. Tom & Bette Lynn
Fankhauser
8. Paul & Ruth DeBruine
Terry & Heather Stoa
10. David & Brandi Brown
11. Todd & Christine Clark
12. Ronald & Sherry Palmer
14. Bruce & Debbie Whitney
16. Nathan & Natalie Harmison
17. Tom & Penny Kotal
19. Roger & Janice Kahila
20. Ron & Bonnie Ruecker
22. Russell & Janet Tiede
26. Clarence & Carolyn Elliott



FIRST SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

JUNE 7

LITURGIST: Sharon Burbes
FLOWERS: Debbie Beal
COFFEE: Ellen Starace
USHERS/GREETER: Gary Weiss,
Don & Dee Wenneker, Sandi
Pleasants

JUNE 14

LITURGIST: Judi Carpenter
FLOWERS: Don & Sherry Palmer
COFFEE: Sheila Mannweiler,
June Coleman
USHERS/GREETER: Chuck
Zweck, Ev & Shirley Kuhn, Jim
Baldwin

JUNE 21

LITURGIST: Marilee Gordon
FLOWERS: Ron & Bonnie
Ruecker
COFFEE: Dave & Marlene Gant
USHERS/GREETER: Dave &
Marlene Gant, Tom & Paula Cordts

JUNE 28

LITURGIST: Paul DeBruine
FLOWERS:
COFFEE: Bill & Alice Huebner
USHERS/GREETER: Jim & Jodi
Baldwin, Dave Carpenter, Darby
Mitchell

SECOND SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

JUNE 7

USHER/GREETER: Sandy
Harmison
REFRESHMENTS: Sandy
Harmison

JUNE 14

USHER/GREETER: Wes
Pietsch
REFRESHMENTS: Wes Pietsch

JUNE 21

USHER/GREETER: Mark &
Jeanette Flenner
REFRESHMENTS: Mark &
Jeanette Flenner

JUNE 28

USHER/GREETER: Leigh
Myers
REFRESHMENTS: Alex &
Angie Miller



Youth Activities

"PRAISE BAND INVITATIONAL"

Come out and enjoy a Youth sponsored Music Event. On Friday, June 19th from 6 – 8 pm the Youth will be hosting the "PRAISE BAND INVITATIONAL" at First Congregational United Church of Christ.

Join our Praise Band and invited musicians under the pavilion for a night filled with music, fun, and fellowship.

The Youth will be offering a \$5.00 dinner. Everyone is invited to bring a lawn chair and enjoy an evening of wonderful music and fellowship. COME ONE, COME ALL!

"COAT COLLECTION"

The Youth Group will be collecting coats to help meet the goal of 1000 Coat for Bayou LaBatre. Please clean out your closet and donate those coats that are no longer needed for the people of Bayou LaBatre, Alabama. Coats can be brought to the church anytime before June 20th. Thank you for supporting not only our Youth, but our community and communities across this country.



MEN'S CHORUS

We're reconstituting our men's chorus to sing some patriotic songs on July 5. Any men of the congregation who would like to join the chorus should come to the two short rehearsals, after the first service on June 14 and June 28.