

Congregational Comments

Vol. 21 No 6: June 2016

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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



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



Pastor Dave Taylor

FROM THE PASTOR

Grace and peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Over ten years ago, on November 1, 2005, I began my ministry with you at First Congregational United Church of Christ and now my time with you is coming to an end. As we now part, I am keenly aware of a sweet sorrow inhabiting my heart. It is sweet because of this time of ministry I have shared with you. It is sad because we are now saying goodbye. As I reflect upon past years, I am amazed at all the ways in which God has brought us together to share in many of life's events. With some of you I have shared great joys and celebrations, such as weddings and baptisms. With some I have shared great times of sorrow and grief with the death of loved ones and memorial services. With some I shared learning and fun through VBS, fellowship times, Confirmation and LOGOS. It has been an honor to share in these events, along with other moments of worship, music, mission, and planning. We have shared in the Gospel, sharing in God's love and being the Body of Christ one to another.

Thank you for your love, your prayers, your encouragement, and your willingness to go where God has called us. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of that time with you.

As we now separate, one from another, I want to ask your forgiveness for any mistakes I have made. Please know that I love you, and will remember First Church and will miss our times together.

A number of you have asked "What will you do now?" We will attend a couple of weddings and visit family and friends, and take in some of the sites along the way. Our retirement time will include fun times and a few "honey do" projects. We've discussed ways of using our talents such as volunteering.

As of July 1st, First Church's former pastoral email account pastordaveucc@sbcglobal.net will be closed to prevent any confusion. To contact Bobbie and me about non-church related topics, use abcdtay@comcast.net.

As I depart, I know that I am leaving you in good hands. I leave knowing and trusting that your First Church family, your church lead-

ers, your conference leaders, your Pastor, and the Holy Spirit will care for you and your needs, along with sharing with you the love that Christ has given to us all. I believe that God will deliver to you a new pastor who will care for you.

I will pray for you as you continue to be the people that God is calling you to be and guide you in your journey of faith. Be strong and of good courage, and do not lose heart, remember that God is with you, be the church of Jesus Christ – love one another and serve the Lord.

May God's rich blessings be upon you all.

Pastor Dave Taylor

VACATION TIME

Pastor Dave and Bobbie will be on vacation from June 12-30. Our guest worship leaders will be June 12 - Rev. Stacey Brohard, June 12 ??__June 19, Mindy Bunselmeyer June 26.

Please call the church office secretary, Chuck Zweck 877-2216 and Marsha Mower 412-8797 with any church concerns. For pastoral care emergencies you may call one of our church leaders and Rev. Mark Schleeter 875-5119 who has agreed to be the first responder in providing pastoral care for hospitalizations, deaths and emergency situations and Rev. Jason Butterick of Prairie Ave Christian Church at 428-3327 church office or 413-7904 cell has agreed to provide back up emergency pastoral care for our members.

You are invited to join us for worship at First Congregational United Church of Christ on Sundays at 9:00AM for our Traditional Service and Sunday School for children and **11:00AM** for our Contemporary Service. At **10:00 AM** we have creative adult Bible Study opportunities. Also at **10:00 AM** you can enjoy renewing or making new friendships while visiting over delicious refreshments in Fellowship Hall.

Come join us in the refreshing experience of worship as we learn God's truth and love for our lives and as we are called to that gift with others. Have a great summer!!

In Christ's Spirit,

Pastor Dave

IS CHURCH CAMP ON YOUR SUMMER CALENDAR?

There is still time to register for a great time at church camp event. Registration information is available. Contact the Conference Website or Marsha Mower.

Our Sympathy and love for the family of Harriette Horn who passed from this life to life eternal in Jesus Christ. We give thanks for Harriette's life and that she is with Jesus in life eternal.

We pray God's blessings and comfort be with all who have loved Harriette. Amen.

Our Women's Night Out event was a great success! A BIG Thanks to our servers, cleaners, presenter, and participants. Well Done!!



CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

Congratulations and best wishes to all of our graduates as you begin a new chapter in your life.

Be sure to congratulate Malone Moretti on her graduation from home school high school. Well Done!

We're proud of you! May God continue to bless you in your future plans.

MUSIC SUNDAY was OUTSTANDING! **OUR SINCERE THANKS!**

A BIG THANK YOU to the members of our Vocal and Handbell Choirs and Laurie Matheson and Bette Fankhauser for their dedication and wonderful talents. Our thanks also to Laurie for serving as our gift-ed organist

A BIG THANK YOU to the members of our First Praise Band and tech team and to Rick Boldizar for their great talents and dedication. Be sure to tell all our gifted musicians..."well done!"

Also a BIG Thank You to all our ministry members on Worship and Music, and those who prepare our of delicious Sunday Morning Fellowship Time refreshments whose efforts throughout the year helps make First Church a great place to worship.

You are all appreciated so much! Please take a moment to express your thanks to these folks for their gifts.

ANOTHER GREAT SEASON OF LEARNING COMPLETED

We THANK all our Sunday School teachers, ministry members and helpers for helping our students learn more about their faith - a job WELL DONE! We also want say to our families, parents, grandparents and students - THANK YOU for making faith a priority in your life and life of your children and youth.

Our thanks to all our all of you, church family, for making faith education a vital priority and for remembering our Christian Education programs in your prayers and through your caring support of time, talents and money.

We GIVE THANKS to Kapora Boone for her work and friendliness as she served as our secretary. Her last day at First Church was May 5th. We wish her well in her new position.

A BIG THANKS to Chuck Zweck who is helping out as we transitioned to a new secretary. **Well done!!**

ILLINOIS CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST ANNUAL MEETING

You have an opportunity to learn more about our UCC church and our conference by attending part or all of our Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ Annual Meeting, June 16-18 at the Embassy Suites, East Peoria, IL. Check the Illinois Conference UCC website for more info or 708-344-4470 .

Adult Ministry

Beginning June 26th the God is Still Speaking Bible Study that meets at 10:00 will begin a study of "What's the Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian" by Martin Thielen. The book and study guide is available on amazon for 12.75 plus shipping. This will be a 21 week study (one chapter per week) so we will plot our progress on the bulletin board in room C so that you can join us at any time.

First Friday Dinner Out (FFDO) is back by popular demand. On June 3rd we will meet at Casa Fuentes at 6:00. Please let Sandy Harmison know by Wednesday, June 1, if you are planning on attending.



VBS

SAVE THE DATES for VBS 2016 at First Church! Hope your summer calendar includes VBS 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 shaping up well for another action-packed, fun-filled week. Many of you have already committed to help, but we are still in need Adult Leaders and Assistants for Cavern Cafe; 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 we 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.



"Retirement Celebration"

Sunday, June 5, 2016

You are invited to join us for a morning of celebration in worship and fellowship for Pastor Dave and Bobbie Taylor.

- *There will be one worship service at 10:00 a.m. In addition to the normal service elements, this service will also include The Sacrament of Holy Communion, music in both the traditional and contemporary styles, Liturgy of Farewell and a celebration and recognition of Pastor Dave and Bobbie's time with us.*
- *At the conclusion of the worship service, a catered brunch will take place downstairs as a time of fellowship for all. RSVPs are needed no later than Sunday, May 29th, so we can plan accordingly.*
- *If you wish to bring a card or letter, a collection basket will be provided.*

Please RSVP by filling out the attached slip and placing it in the offering plate or emailing the church office (firstchurchdecatur@sbcglobal.net) or calling the church office (877-2216) no later than May 29th.

_____ I/We plan to attend the Retirement brunch on June 5th.

Names



At the Women's Spring Banquet on May 13th, Gypsy Redmond brought quilts, had two girls hold them up and told stories to go along with them. Darby Mitchell, her daughter, shared how her sisters enabled the quilting with patterns and materials. A catered meal was enjoyed by all.



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed |
|---|---|--|---|
| |  | | 1 |
| 5 10:00 Dave's Retirement Celebration Brunch after service | 6 | 7 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA | 8 |
| 12 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship | 13 5:30 Admin Meeting | 14  1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA | 15 9:00-12:00 Preschool Summer Let's get going |
| 19 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship | 20 7:00 Church Council | 21 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA | 22 |
| 26 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship | 27 | 28 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA | 29 |

| Thu | | Fri | Sat |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 00 ol Flight t Grow- | 16 1:15 Book Club | 17 | 18 8:00 Church Work Day |
| | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| | 30 | | |

NEW CHURCH MEMBERS MAY 15, 2016

On Sunday, May 15, Robert, Penny and Andrew Butts became new members of our church. Their two sons, Conner and Gavin joined us as preparatory members. We welcome this family into Christ's household of faith.



Photo by Gary Baker





FIRST CHURCH
FOODS RESOURCE BANK
GROWING PROJECT

It's time to start our 2016 FRB growing project!

This is our **eleventh** 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 over 50 FRB programs supporting families in small villages in 29 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.

Our 2015 growing project provided \$7,161.78 to help people in Zambia. **In the past ten years First Church in Decatur has raised over \$77,000 to teach people in Kenya, Bosnia, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, North Korea, Cambodia and Zambia to feed themselves and to experience the dignity and pride in supporting their families.**

This year's cost to plant our project is \$369 per acre--\$30.00 less than last year's cost. The breakdown per acre is:

- \$ 126.00 for seed
- 170.00 for fertilizer
- 32.00 for herbicide
- 25.00 for fungicide
- 10.00 for diesel fuel
- 6.00 for crop hail insurance

Therefore, the total amount needed to plant our corn crop this year is \$1845.00. Our current crop is planted and the corn plants are about 6" tall. 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.

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 and "like" us.

Church Office Hours - The church office will be open at least (and more up to 32 hours): Mondays 1:30-5:00; Tuesdays 8:00-10:45; Wednesdays 8:00-3:00; Thursdays 8:00-10:45.

Staff Changes - We say "Farewell and God Bless You" to Kapora Boone, as she moves on to a full-time position with benefits. We thank her for her 3 years with us and wish her and her family well. We say "Welcome and God Bless You" to Chuck Zweck who is serving as our Interim Administrative Secretary.

MARCH 2016 FINANCIAL REPORT

| | <u>March 16</u> | <u>YTD</u> |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Budget Income | \$18,431.00 | \$55,293.00 |
| Budget Expense | \$17,971.56 | \$53,914.68 |
| Income | \$15,997.80 | \$51,272.80 |
| Expenses | \$22,433.22 | \$53,172.70 |

APRIL 2016 FINANCIAL REPORT

| | <u>April 16</u> | <u>YTD</u> |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Budget Income | \$18,431.00 | \$70,714.00 |
| Budget Expense | \$17,971.56 | \$71,886.24 |
| Income | \$18,112.00 | \$69,384.80 |
| Expenses | \$13,774.25 | \$66,946.95 |

From Your Church President.....

WOW - Since my last "note" to you, things have continued to move at a rapid pace around here!

Four goals have been approved for First Church this year and work is continuing on all of these. These goals can be found on another page of this newsletter.

Pastor Dave and Bobbie Taylor have announced their retirements and we wish them Godspeed on the next phase of their lives. Retirement Celebration details are included in this newsletter. Please plan to join us on June 5 as we share this final Sunday with them. Admin Ministry has had many meetings and discussions with our Association Conference Minister, Tom Norwalk, regarding the proper procedures for the next weeks and months. We are prayerfully considering all the many options available to us, seeking to discern God's will for us and finding the "best fit" for our congregation. We will keep you informed as things progress.

Kapora Boone, our Administrative Secretary has moved on to her new position and Chuck Zweck is serving as our Interim Administrative Secretary at this time. Plans are in the works to proceed with hiring a permanent person.

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.

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!

Marsha Mower, Church President

Pastoral Care Visits: Several years ago, lay people visited our homebound members on a regular basis. We would like to restart this practice in the very near future and are looking for volunteers who feel called to serve in this way. If you are willing to be part of this ministry team, please submit your name to the church office. If you have an interest in taking the lead in this endeavor, we would appreciate knowing that as well. Thank you for your prayerful consideration of this opportunity

Habitat for Humanity:

Are you interested in volunteering with the Decatur Area Habitat for Humanity, but just aren't sure how? Shirley Zimmerman wants everyone to know that it's pretty simple to get involved. Simply go to www.DecaturHabitat.org on your computer (The site isn't mobile friendly, so you may not want to try it on your phone or tablet) and click on "Volunteer" on their site menu in Yellow just under the where it tells you that they serve Macon County. Then click on the button to the right under the site menu that says "Click here to download a Volunteer application." This opens a Word document that you can print. If you can't open it, or need help, let Chuck Zweck, our Interim Administrative Secretary in the Church Office know and he can help you get it, send you a PDF or print it. This form lets you choose how you'd like to help out (previous construction experience isn't required and there's more than just building, like providing food, delivering materials). After you have submitted the form which includes a liability waiver, they'll let you know when opportunities are available for your chosen volunteering option.

REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR AND VISIT MEMBERS WHO ARE IN 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



YOUTH ACTIVITIES

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Thank You to everyone who donated baby clothes, accessories, and funds for the Senior Mission Trip to Daytona, Florida. We are proud to be a part of a Church that enthusiastically supports the Youth Ministry and by doing so gives to the less fortunate both locally and across the nation. We offer a special thanks to God's Busy Hands for the beautiful blankets that were obviously made with love and donated abundantly. We are fortunate to have such a wonderful group in our church.

High School Graduate Recognition

Calling all 2016 high school graduates! Please submit names and phone number or e-mail address for high school graduates who should be recognized by First Church. A recognition ceremony will be held in June. More information will be released soon.





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
19. Harold Harmison
Kimberly Withrow
22. Penny Kotal
23. Ann Stringer
24. William Hickman
Tracy Bauer
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
2. Frank & Shelly Smith
7. Tom & Bette Lynn
Fankhauser
8. Paul & Ruth DeBruine
Terry & Heather Stoa
10. David & Brandi Brown
Alex & Angie Miller
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
Katie Hammon
22. Tracy Bauer
26. Clarence & Carolyn Elliott
27. Brittany Kapper



FIRST SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

JUNE 5

LITURGIST: Marilee Gordon

FLOWERS: Debby Beal

COFFEE: Peggy Druessel

USHERS/GREETER:

JUNE 12

LITURGIST: Any Leman

FLOWERS: Rob & Kathy Moore

COFFEE: Ellen Starace

USHERS/GREETER:

JUNE 19

LITURGIST: Ellen Starace

FLOWERS: Ron & Bonnie
Ruecker

COFFEE: Judi Carpenter

USHERS/GREETER:

JUNE 26

LITURGIST: Bill Huebner

FLOWERS: Marsha Mower

COFFEE: Betty Cummings

USHERS/GREETER:

SECOND SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

JUNE 5

USHER/GREETER: Sandy
Harmison

REFRESHMENTS: Sandy
Harmison

JUNE 12

USHER/GREETER: Leigh
Myers

REFRESHMENTS: Angie Miller

JUNE 19

USHER/GREETER: Ruski-
Moretti Family

REFRESHMENTS: Ruski-
Moretti Family

JUNE 26

USHER/GREETER: Betty
Wheatley

REFRESHMENTS: Betty
Wheatley





CHURCH WORK DAY

Keep Saturday, June 18 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 18
8:00 TO ?**



**Workers at Past
Work Days**

