

Congregational Comments

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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 Ryan Travis

FROM THE PASTOR

One of the reasons we know the Bible is true is that it doesn't sugarcoat things. There is scarcely a biblical figure who isn't shown with flaws and weaknesses. Isn't it good to know that heroes of the faith like Noah, Sarah, Moses, David, Rachel, and Peter struggled in many of the same ways we do? These were all holy people, yet they weren't perfect; the Bible shows us both their good and bad character traits. If the Bible were fiction, we would expect the less flattering accounts to be edited out.

The New Testament gives us several examples of something none of us enjoy: disagreement and conflict in the church. You can read about Paul rebuking Peter over hypocrisy (Galatians 2:11-21), complaints over how the poor were being served (Acts 6:1-6), the disciples arguing over whose role was more important (Luke 9:46), and many, many others.

One of the most interesting accounts of conflict comes from Acts 16:36-41, when Barnabas and Paul parted ways. At some point, John Mark had not followed through on a commitment, so Paul wouldn't take him on any further missionary journeys – Paul considered John Mark unreliable. Barnabas insisted that John Mark had changed. Rather than dwell on it, Barnabas took John Mark and went one way, and Paul took Silas and went another.

On one hand, it would seem that this conflict was unfortunate – the powerhouse duo of Paul and Barnabas was broken apart. The two had worked side-by-side, performing miracle after miracle. The Spirit was growing the church exponentially through them. But, on the other hand, God used this split to grow the church even more. With Barnabas and Paul going in opposite directions, the church grew much more rapidly. They were able to plant churches simultaneously in multiple locations. If they had stayed together, only half as much would have gotten done.

The Bible tells us in multiple places to “be of one mind” and to have “no divisions” among us. That is always our ultimate goal. However, we cannot dismiss the possibility that God occasionally uses our disagreements to grow the kingdom – to push us out of our set patterns and engage ministry in new and fresh ways we otherwise may not have con-

sidered.

The bottom line: Church conflict is not something to be sought after or allowed to persist long-term. Still, when it happens, we aren't to fear or dread it. Rather, we approach God together and see if we are being called to change. We don't ignore the issue and sweep it under the rug, yet at the same time, we remain polite and kind to others, no matter how strongly we feel. Sometimes we have to be like Paul and Barnabas and go our separate ways – or choose to serve the church in another capacity – in order to grow the kingdom further, and sometimes we have to yield our positions and allow another's opinion to prevail for the good of the whole. In all cases, we prayerfully seek the Spirit's guidance. Then we make a decision and move forward, not dwelling on the past.

Oh, and about Paul and John Mark (also known as "Mark")? The Bible suggests they eventually set aside their differences and worked together again, years later. Paul would eventually send Mark to visit the Colossians on his behalf (Colossians 4:10) and say he was "of great service" while he was imprisoned (2 Timothy 4:11).



INSTALLATION OF PASTOR RYAN TRAVIS



FIRST CHURCH FOODS RESOURCE BANK GROWING PROJECT

Routed in Community Grounded in Faith

It's time to start our 2017 FRB growing project!

This is our **12th** 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 56 FRB programs supporting families in small villages in 30 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 2016 growing project provided \$7,598.84 to help people in Zambia. In the past eleven years **First Church in Decatur has raised over \$85,000** to teach people in Kenya, Bosnia, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, North Korea, Cambodia, Zambia, and India to feed themselves and to experience the dignity and pride in supporting their families.

This year's cost to plant our project is \$337 per acre.

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.



Alice Huebner brings us some lovely, colorful fleece blankets made by the God's Busy Hands group at First Congregational United Church of Christ. Thanks for sharing your talents with us, ladies!

Photo and words from God's Shelter of Love Facebook Page

FFDO

For June we are doing something different again. We will meet on Tuesday, June 6 at RCC's Bistro 537 at 6. Everyone had a great time last time so we are trying it again! Let me know if you will be joining us.

Sandy Harmison





VBS 2017

July 23-27

Sunday through Thursday

6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

**First Congregational
United Church of Christ
3465 N. MacArthur Rd.
877-2216**


We're getting close to VBS 2017 at First Church! Our theme is MAKER FUN FACTORY – Created by GOD – Built for a Purpose. We will meet Decker, Tina, Bubba, Skyler and Abbee as they help us with our daily Bible Point, Story and Key Verse. We will have a week full of jaw-dropping experiences that will spark our imaginations. Kids (and adults) will discover they're lovingly crafted by God, experiencing God in new and wildly creative ways! Our mission project, through Operation Kid-to-Kid, will help bring clean water to families in remote villages in Peru. Each evening our school age children we will participate in Sound Wave Sing & Play, Bible Discovery, Imagination Station, Snack Factory, Game Makers, KidVid Cinema, Spotlight VBS and Fun Shop Finale. Our preschool children will join us at Sound Wave Sing & Play, move to Tinker Tot's Preschool for their very own self-contained program that will include their very own Fun Shop Finale. Preschool children have the option of leaving at 8:05, if their family prefers.


All children age 3 through those who have completed 5th grade are invited to attend. Pre-registration is encouraged, but not required – it helps us plan and saves you time on the first night. **Registration forms** will be on the bulletin boards very soon.

Leaders are needed in the following areas: Adults for Crew Leaders and Registration. Mature and responsible Jr/Sr High youth are encouraged to assist in the various areas a part of our "staff." Youth who completed 6th grade this school year are invited to join as Assistant Crew Leaders. Please let us know how you can help!

Supply lists will be available very soon, in case you would like to help us out in this way.

Thanks! Director Marsha Mower

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellowship Hour 11:00 Contemporary			
4	5 6:30-8:00 12 Step Group	6 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	7 4:15-6:45 5:45-6:15 Pageant 7:30 Cho
11	12 4:30 Admin 6:30-8:00 12 Step Group	13 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	14 7:00 Cho
18 Confirmation Sunday 10:00 Reception	19 4:30 Choir of Ministry Teams 6:30-8:00 12 Step Group	20 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	21 7:00 Cho
25	26 6:30-8:00 12 Step Group	27 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	28

	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 6:00 Women's Spring Program	3 8:00-11:00 AA
LOGOS Practice ir	8	9	10 8:00-11:00 AA
ir	15 1:00 Book Club	16	17 8:00-11:00 AA
ir	22	23	24 8:00-11:00 AA
	29	30	

MEAL ON WHEELS

Thank you to these 21 First Church volunteers who helped deliver Meals on Wheels the week of May 15:

Sharon Burbes

Dave Carpenter

Tom and Paula Cordts

Jeanette and Mark Flenner

Ev and Shirley Kuhn

Peggy Ruff

Don Wenneker

Dave and Marlene Gant

Paul and Ruth Debruine

Peggy Druessel

Bill and Alice Huebner

Bonnie and Ron Ruecker

Pastor Ryan Travis

Charles Zweck

Meals on Wheels always needs more volunteers to deliver meals. Volunteers deliver one route on one day and work in teams of 2 (usually one driver and one runner). Meals are picked up at Decatur Memorial Hospital between 10:00 and 10:30 AM and each route includes detailed directions and instructions for each home. Routes require about an hour for delivery.

First Congregational Church helps deliver Meals on Wheels twice a year. Our next week to help is September 4-8. If you would like to be included on the list to help with this rewarding service and you have not already signed up on the time and talent sheet last fall, please contact Sue Bunselmeyer, 877-5926 or leave a message at the church office



Charles Zweck and Darla Weltmer

Dave & Marlene Gant, Nick and Sally Lauer

Church members at the Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast Buffet



Rally Day

Save the Date!

Rally Day will be September 10th this year kicking off our new Sunday School year and fall programs! We are in the beginning stages of planning. Please let Carol Robertson or Robert Ruehrup know if you are willing to be on our activity planning committee!

APRIL 2017 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>April 17</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$18,288.92	\$73,155.68
Budget Expense	\$17,714.72	\$70,858.88
Income	\$17,440.06	\$64,801.40
Expenses	\$13,389.56	\$65,372.99

MARCH 2017 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>March 17</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$18,288.92	\$54,866.76
Budget Expense	\$17,714.72	\$53,144.16
Income	\$14,168.00	\$47,361.34
Expenses	\$19,829.73	\$51,983.43

Women's Fellowship Luncheon

Save the date of June 23

Women's Fellowship lunch at La Tea Da
Tea Room

PS More information will be put in the bulletin closer to the date

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

Primrose Retirement Community

Claude Young—Room 228

Keystone

Carolyn Jones—Room 216

Vonderlieth Living Center, Mt. Pulaski, IL

Alice Roach

Hickory Point Christian Village

Al Wilson—Room 202

Evergreen Place

Mary Lou Phipps— Room 208

Fair Haven Christian Home

Lois Shelton—Room 113



YOUTH BIBLES

Congratulations to our 3rd graders who received Bibles this year: Emery Bunselmeyer, Reed Cordts and Noah Harmison! God Bless you in your journey of faith!

SUNDAY SCHOOL VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION 2017

God Bless our Sunday School Staff (including Nursery Care that assists with SS, Children's Time, VBS Director, and Ministry members) recognized during both services May 14th. We thank them for their dedication to our children and for all the work that goes in to keeping the program fresh and interesting for the kids. Thank you to the following volunteers:

Kate Hammon

Mindy Bunselmeyer

Devon Moretti

Debbie Moster

Stacey Carter

Malone Moretti (sub)

Alice Huebner (sub)

Missy Boldizar

Carol Robertson (sub)

Amy Leman (sub)

Robert Ruehrup

Marsha Mower (VBS)





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
3. Stacey Carter
6. Mark Flenner
8. June Lindsten
Madeline Mitchell
10. Dee Wenneker
23. Ann Stringer
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. Alex & Angie Miller
11. Todd & Christine Clark
12. Ronald & Sherry Palmer
14. Bruce & Debbie Whitney
19. Roger & Janice Kahila
20. Ron & Bonnie Ruecker
Kevin & Katie Hammon
26. Clarence & Carolyn Elliott
27. Bryce & Brittany Kapper



FIRST SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

JUNE 4

LITURGIST: Amy Leman
FLOWERS: Robby & Kathy Moore
COFFEE: Clarence & Carolyn Elliott
USHERS/GREETER: Joe & Carol Robertson, Tom Cordts, Mike Koyak

JUNE 11

LITURGIST: Dee Wenneker
FLOWERS: Debbie Beal
COFFEE: Jerry & Peggy Ruff
USHERS/GREETER: Marsha Mower, Chuck Zweck, Don & Dee Wenneker

JUNE 18

LITURGIST: Penny Butts
FLOWERS: Ron & Bonnie Ruecker
COFFEE: Chuck Zweck
USHERS/GREETER: Tom & Paula Cordts, Bill Huebner, Sandi Pleasants

JUNE 25

LITURGIST: Marilee Gordon
FLOWERS:
COFFEE: Ellen Starace
USHERS/GREETER: Robert & Peggy Butts, Sheila Mannweiler, Jodi Baldwin

SECOND SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

JUNE 4

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

JUNE 11

USHER/GREETER: Wes Pietsch
REFRESHMENTS: Wes Pietsch

JUNE 18

USHER/GREETER: Devon Moretti
REFRESHMENTS: Missy Boldizar

JUNE 25

USHER/GREETER: James Huckile
REFRESHMENTS: Sandy Harmison



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 - Gary Baker and Marsha Mower have started the re-write/consolidation of the Org Manual, Constitution and By-Laws, to incorporate our current ministry team model.
- Goal 2 – Outreach Ministry Team Co-Leaders, Joe Moretti and Gary Baker, are visiting the local agencies we support, to assess the needs and determine if we need to reallocate the support we give.
- 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. He foresees this taking place in October, running into early November.