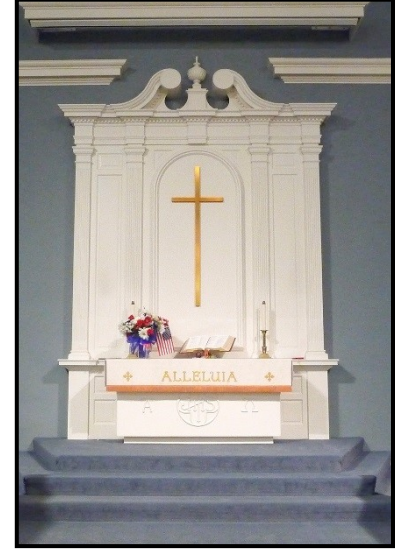


Congregational Comments



Vol. 23 No. 6: June 2018

Important Contacts in the Church

Pastor: Rev. Ryan Travis, 217-413-4272

Email: pastorryan@firstchurchdecatur.org

Prayer Chain: Bette Fankhauser, 877-6723

Email: blfankhauser@comcast.com

Playmates Preschool: Interim Director: Alfreda Tribout

Newsletter Editor: Bill Huebner, 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.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 Ryan



Pastor Ryan

The Church Is a Hospital

And when the scribes and Pharisees saw [Jesus] eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, "How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?" When Jesus heard this, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need for a physician, but those who are sick do. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (Mark 2:16-17).

You may have heard an old phrase, attributed to various authorities but probably based on the passage above, saying "The church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints." What does this mean?

The 1950s are often reflected upon as a golden age in American history, and for the church in particular. Make no mistake: it was an era of prosperity, growth, and shared moral values – all good things. At the same time, there existed social pressure to put up a façade that everything was fine, even when it wasn't. Soldiers returning from war carried battle scars. Women transitioning from the war-time factories to lives as homemakers had trouble adapting. Racial tension and prejudice boiled over. And problems ranging from alcoholism and PTSD to child abuse and marital infidelity were swept under the rug. When we think of the social upheaval and rebellion among college-aged citizens in the 1960s, we need only remember that those "radical" kids, as they had come to be known, grew up in the "pristine and perfect" households a decade earlier. Clearly, not all was what it seemed to be. Modern television programs and movies now routinely challenge the once undisputed narrative that the '50s were a bygone era we should strive to recapture.

I mention this because denominations like ours came of age in the '50s, and some of our cultural practices and preferences harken back to that age. We not only built facades to fool the broader community that all was well, we came to church and pretended that we had it all together. Church became a place (or museum) where the "righteous" would gather on a weekly basis. In some respects, this is still our expectation.

Church should be a place where you can come and let it all hang out. Are you struggling with addiction? Is there relationship strife and discord? Are you worried sick and can't change, no matter how hard you try? Are you depressed, lonely, or angry? Are you struggling with sin, whether it be dishonesty or pornography? Are you in debt up to your ears and can't see a way out. Have your children gotten off course?

Let's begin the process of tearing down the phony facades and realizing that church is place to come to find healing. The first step in any process of recovery is to admit the problem exists and that we need help. You can start by setting up an appointment to talk with me. I will gladly lend you an ear, help you seek God's guidance, and perhaps refer you to others if I think they can be of service. I maintain open office hours on Wednesday mornings from 9 to noon and Thursday afternoons from 1:30-4:30. I am also available by appointment. Just give me a call or drop me an email. Let the healing begin here, in the hospital called the church.

EVENTS



Bill & Alice Huebner are celebrating Fifty Years of Marriage at First Congregational Church,
Saturday, June 16th at an Open House from 2:00 pm until 5:00 pm.
The happy couple requests only your presence, as your fellowship is the only gift they desire!
A blessing will be given by Pastor Ryan Travis at 3:00 PM
To RSVP text 217-972-7405 by June 1st or 876-1446 or ahuebner@prodigy.net



Coffee Maker Replacement



Replacing Coffee Maker in Kitchen

The new coffee maker is installed and working fine. Thank you to everyone who helped pay for the new coffee maker.

Church Directory

We are working on an update to the church directory. Everyone should get an email to look over the data in the directory and add/modify the information as needed.

Meals on Wheels

Thank you to these First Church members and friends who helped deliver Meals on Wheels the week of May 14:

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Sharon and Mac Butler | Jeanette Flenner | Margie Malone |
| Dave Carpenter | Dave & Marlene Gant | Dody McQueen |
| Tom and Paula Cordts | Bill & Alice Huebner | Bonnie & Ron Ruecker |
| Paul and Ruth Debruine | Ev & Shirley Kuhn | Shirley Zimmerman |
| 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.

Elevator Challenge Update



ELEVATOR CHALLENGE UPDATE!

As of May 7, we have only **\$18,423.10** left to collect to pay for the elevator lift **IN FULL!** This is exciting news and reflects the enormous generosity of our First family! Thank you to everyone who has donated thus far.

We've got some more great news! Earlier this year, a generous benefactor who remains anonymous issued a challenge: He would donate the equivalent of 25 percent of all contributions received from Jan. 1 to June 30 of this year. The challenge is capped at \$40,000 collected, meaning this friend of the congregation potentially could make a donation up to \$10,000 (25 percent of \$40,000), depending on what funds the congregation is able to generate.

Since Jan. 1, we've received \$25,354, putting our challenge-maker on the hook thus far for \$6,338.50. This is even better news than it sounds: When added to the \$18,423.10 balance listed above, it means **we are only \$12,084.60 from reaching our 3-year goal...TODAY!** Talk about generosity! Thank you, members of First and our friends!

The Elevator Challenge continues through June 30, and our benefactor still has \$3,661.50 of potential matching funds to offer. Considering we already have outstanding pledges that could more than cover the remaining balance, **would you consider making a contribution to the Elevator Fund by June 30 so that we can take full advantage of the challenge?**

If you've already paid your pledges or are unable to contribute at this time, we fully understand and place no pressure upon you. We just don't want to let this opportunity pass us by and are broadcasting it accordingly.

And, just so you know the great depth of kindness and giving in our church family: Since we launched the **Lifting Spirits** capital campaign in December, we've received **a total of \$43,195!** Thank you for making this project such a success. The contract is signed, and construction will begin later this year. God's blessings to you!

Foods Resource Bank



FIRST CHURCH FOODS RESOURCE BANK GROWING PROJECT

Routed in Community Grounded in Faith

It's time to start our 2018 FRB growing project!

This is our **13th** 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 2017 growing project provided \$6,587 to help people in India. In the past twelve years **First Church in Decatur has raised over \$91,000** 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 \$353 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.

Finance Notes

MARCH 2018 FINANCIAL REPORT

| | <u>Mar 18</u> | <u>YTD</u> |
|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| Budget Income | \$17,420.92 | \$52,262.75 |
| Budget Expense | \$17,269.15 | \$51,807.45 |
| Income | \$20,413.50 | \$53,712.29 |
| Expenses | \$13,860.13 | \$49,363.20 |

APRIL 2018 FINANCIAL REPORT

| | <u>Apr 18</u> | <u>YTD</u> |
|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| Budget Income | \$17,420.92 | \$69,683.68 |
| Budget Expense | \$17,269.15 | \$69,076.60 |
| Income | \$19,342.75 | \$73,055.04 |
| Expenses | \$13,612.04 | \$62,975.24 |



Children and Youth Activities

Children's and Youth Summer Outreach Project

Children's, Youth, and Outreach ministries are teaming up to help with disaster relief in this country and around the world. This summer, we will be collecting items for 50 School Kits and 50 Hygiene Kits as a part of Church World Service's disaster relief.

You can help with this project by placing requested items in one of the collection boxes (located at a church entrance). You may also donate funds (please write "Summer Outreach Project" in the memo line) and we will shop for you.

See the lists below for the specific items needed for each kit. We will track our progress throughout the summer on a poster in Fellowship Hall. We will announce our progress to-date at Rally Day.

Thank you for your continued support of mission projects in our community and around the world!

School Kits

- One pair of blunt scissors removed from the package (rounded tip only)
- Three 70-count bound notebooks or notebooks totaling 200-210 pages(no loose leaf or filler paper)
- One 30-centimeter, 12" ruler
- One hand held pencil sharpener removed from the package
- One large eraser (no pencil cap erasers)
- Six new, unsharpened pencils with erasers, removed from the package
- One box of 24 crayons

Hygiene Kits

- One hand towel measuring approximately 15"x28" to 16"x32" (no fingertip, bath, dish towel, or micro-fiber)
- One washcloth
- One wide-tooth comb removed from the package
- One fingernail or toenail clipper removed from the package
- One bath size bar of soap in the original package
- One ADULT SIZE toothbrush in the original package
- Ten standard size Band-Aids



Children's Lego Event

Here are the winners of the Children's Lego Event.

All entries were amazing! Here are the winners for each category.

Most Creative- Cameron Most Colorful- Emery and Quinn Funniest-Quincy Most Unique- Isaiah Most Original- Gehrig and Chase

Thank you to all the children for sharing their creativity and imagination with us.

Thank you to our judges: Alice Huebner and Mitchell Daly

Mother/Daughter/Friends Banquet-May 11



Everyone having a good time



Our speaker talking about raising Bees



The Cooks

Bill Huebner, Tom Cordts, Ev Kuhn and Paul Debrune

Dave Carpenter was taking the pictures

Ladies waiting to start eating



Happenings

FFDO

**Doherty's
Friday,
June 1
6:00 pm**



God's Busy Hands

**Tuesdays
1:00 - 3:00 pm**



God's Busy Hands

Admin Meeting

**Monday, June 11
5:30 pm**

Council of Minis- try Teams

**Monday, June 18
5:30 pm**

God's Busy Hands

God's Busy Hands provided food on April 22nd for breakfast between church services. Thank you to the following people: Laurel Lorey, Ellen Whitrock, Lou DeGroot, Betty Henry, Paula Cordts, Betty Wheatley, Betty Cummings, Peggy Druessel, Shirley Kuhn, Alice Huebner, Ruth DeBruine and Bonnie Ruecker.

Proceeds go toward replenishing fleece and yarn for making blankets.

Recently 74 blankets were delivered to the Wood Street and McKinley/Oakland Dialysis Centers, New Life Pregnancy Center, and Baby TALK programs at Central Christian Church. It is a joy To deliver blankets and watch the appreciation on the faces of adults who will give them to those in need!

June 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.

2. Patricia Weiss
3. Stacey Carter
6. Mark Flenner
8. June Lindsten
Madeline Mitchell
10. Dee Wenneker
14. Ron Horn
23. Ann Stringer
25. Allen Gerhold
26. Sue Bunselmeyer
27. Paula Carmichael
30. Bonnie Ruecker



And may the many blessings that have come from God above fill your hearths with all the joy 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 Church Sunday Morning

| | Date | 9:00 AM Service | 11:00 AM Service |
|---|---------|---|------------------|
|  LITURGISTS | June 3 | Ruth DeBruine | Cathy Richardson |
| | June 10 | Penny Butts | Betty Wheatley |
| | June 17 | Marilee Gordon | Fonseca Family |
| | June 24 | Chuck Zweck | Sandy Harmison |
|  | June 3 | Bill & Alice Huebner | |
| | June 10 | Don & Dee Wenneker | |
| | June 17 | Ron & Bonnie Ruecker | |
| | June 24 | Gary Baker | |
|  | June 3 | Kristin Hargrove | Cathy Richardson |
| | June 10 | Don & Dee Wenneker | Betty Wheatley |
| | June 17 | Ellen Starace | Fonseca Family |
| | June 24 | Lynn & Darla Weltmer | Sandy Harmison |
|  | June 3 | Dave & Marlene Gant, Mark & Mindy Bunselmeyer | |
| | June 10 | Dave Carpenter, Darla Weltmer, Robert & Penny Butts | |
| | June 17 | Marilee Gordon, Bill & Alice Huebner, Chuck Zweck | |
| | June 24 | Pat & Margie Malone, Ellen Starace, Sheila Mannweiler | |

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

June Calendar

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



**First Congregational UCC
3465 N. MacArthur Rd.
Decatur, IL 62526-1450**

2018 Church Goals

Your Council of Ministry Teams has approved the following 3 goals for 2018:

2018 Church Goals

Working on goals for 2018, let one of the church officers know if you have an idea for a goal.

1. Create a safe church policy and conduct training to support this policy.
2. Reestablish an active evangelism ministry.
3. Initiate a second Bible study for this year.