

**THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS TURNED IN
THEIR EMAIL ADDRESS FOR THE NEWSLETTER**

We are now sending over 79 newsletters by email.



Newsletter

Would you like to get this Newsletter at home?
Just send the church office your e-mail address.

Congegational Comments

Vol. 18 No 3: March 2013

Pastor: Rev. Dave Taylor

Prayer Chain: Marsha Mower: 875-0733

Email: m.mower@sbcglobal.net

Playmates Preschool:

Director, Cathi Tavarczyk: 875-7054

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



*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

EASTER MEDITATION

As a parish pastor, it is sometimes easy to let Easter become a church-y celebration, a "special Sunday." It happened to me until I was touched by this story.

Pastor Ted Schroder shares his experience: *I found Maggie in the midnight-darkened*

hallway of the hospital, bending over as if in pain. She was waiting for the 5 minutes of each hour when she was allowed to go in and be with her husband.

Maggie and her husband had never been apart, she told me. In the 55 years they had been married, they had never spent a night apart. Through all the years on the farm, through the births and raising of their children, through the illnesses they had both suffered, they had never been apart. Now he was dying. I think she knew it, but the doctor wanted me to tell her that her beloved Harold could not last the night.

Why don't you go on home, I suggested. I'll sit here for a while." I can't go," she said. I held her hand and we prayed. The nurse came by. You can go in now," she said. Don't forget the gowns and the masks. We don't want the infection to spread."

Harold didn't recognize the 2 green-shrouded figures that came to his bed; at least, not until Maggie took his hand, moved her mask and touched her lips to his cheek.

I said a prayer out loud, but all the time she was whispering to him. She kept her head right alongside his on the pillow, talking to him as if she belonged there.

Later in the hallway, she was weeping.

What did you say to Harold?" I asked, more to cover the silence than to get information.

I told him I loved him and that I would stay with him."

You know he's very ill. He may not be with us in the morning."

There was a long silence. I know," she said. He knows he is dying, too. He is afraid a little. I can tell by the way he holds my hand. But it's all right. I know he's all right now. I told him it will be Easter in the morning."

I did not know what to say. It was November. Had she forgotten? Um...It's not really Easter, I ventured.

I know, Pastor," she said patiently, But for us it is. We've practiced celebrating Easter together for all of our years. Now for Harold and me, tomorrow is our Easter."

For those of us who have the audacity to believe that ...*"just as Christ was raised from the dead...so we, too, might walk in the newness of life."* (Romans 6:4), Easter is not a day, not a merely a special Sunday, nor a season. Easter is who we are...and who we are becoming. Through Christ's salvation we are born anew to be creatures of God's love, sharing the Good News, helping to transform the world.

We hold the outrageous conviction that, by the power of God, every death can lead to new life. Death to old values leads us to a new life of affirmation for all God's people.

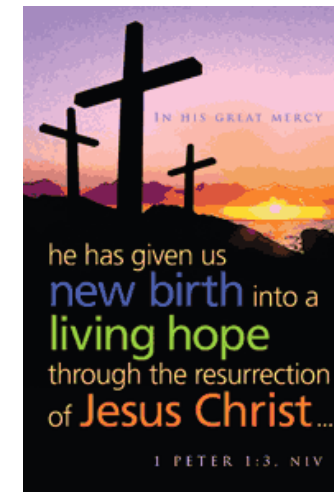
We do not await a "someday" resurrection. We do not dwell in the gloomy shadow of death until the coming of a distant morning. Death is being overcome in us. WE ARE EASTER PEOPLE...Now! We are changed in God's life-giving love.

Christ is risen! Indeed, Christ is risen! In you, in me, Christ is risen today and every day. Let us live the love of Christ that frees us from our deadly lives and offers us new life through the power of love and resurrection.

O Spirit of Christ, fill us with the transforming power of the Resurrection, that we might experience and be a part of the power of God's life-giving love. Amen.

Come join us at First Congregational United Church of Christ as we worship Christ, our Risen Savior, and discover with us the transforming power of Easter that fills the everyday lives of God's people and the world.

Pastor Dave





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. Gregory Tsuda
2. Suzanne Cordts
Mitchell Daley
Brooklyn Flies
3. Celeste Ritter
4. Andy Baldwin
Don Carter
5. Samantha Kelley
6. Gregory Baltimore
8. Ruth Budd
9. Walter Jones
11. Kenneth Johnson
Michelle Settles
12. Erica Moster
Logan Wenneker
13. Tucker Clark
Christopher Reyman
Jeff Toberman
15. Jullian Clifton
Edna Palmer
16. Mary Hamman
17. Bekki Cheatham
Bill Rieninger
18. Randal Beck
Carol Cooley
22. Roger Kahila
Clinton Mueller
Wesley Pietsch
Riley Kretsinger
Luke Wenneker
23. Brian Young
Kendall Gibson
24. Melissa Boldizar
Chase Brown

24. Brett Grandon
25. Jillian Daley
27. Kathy Ann Baker
Brandon Hubner
29. Alexander Clifton
31. Bette Lynn Fankhauser
Gary Weiss

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. David & Sharon Walker
9. Robert & Suzanne Cordts
10. David & Marlene Gant
15. David & Judi Carpenter
17. Wallace & Laurel Lorey
19. Edward & Mary Yonan
25. Luke & Tara Wenneker
27. Jack & June Fiddler McGinnis
28. William & Madeline Mitchell
30. Mark & Nansi Naranjo Yonan

MARCH

FIRST SERVICE VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

MARCH 3

LITURGIST: Mindy Bunselmeyer
FLOWERS: Roger & Melinda Redman
COFFEE: Howard & Nancy Beede
USHERS/GREETER: Tom & Paula Cordts, Todd & Christina Clark

MARCH 10

LITURGIST: Dee Wenneker
FLOWERS: Sandi Pleasants
COFFEE: Sheila Mannweiler
USHERS/GREETER: Bill & Martha Crookshank, Mark & Susan Daley

MARCH 17

LITURGIST: Judi Carpenter
FLOWERS: Sharon Burbes
COFFEE: Ned & Sandy Cummiings
USHERS/GREETER: Sheila Mannweiler, Sandy Pleasants, Joe & Carol Robertson

MARCH 24

LITURGIST: Amy Leman
FLOWERS: Al Wilson
COFFEE: Allen & Ann Gerhold
USHERS/GREETER: Sandy Cummings, Bill Huebner, Dave & Judi Carpenter

MARCH 28

LITURGIST: Bobbie Taylor
USHERS/GREETER: Alexis Fankhauser, Darla Weltmer, Pat & Margle Malone

MARCH 31

LITURGIST: Al Gerhold
FLOWERS: Easter Lilies
COFFEE:
USHERS/GREETER: Lindsay Malone, Darla Weltmer, Jim & Jodi Baldwin

SECOND SERVICE VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

MARCH 3

USHER/GREETER: Maureen Ruski & Joe Moretti
REFRESHMENTS: Maureen Ruski

MARCH 10

USHER/GREETER: Mike Koyak
REFRESHMENTS: Mike Koyak

MARCH 17

USHER/GREETER: Bruce & Debbie Whitney
REFRESHMENTS: Bruce & Debbie Whitney

MARCH 24

USHER/GREETER: Betty Wheatley
REFRESHMENTS: Betty Wheatley

MARCH 31

USHER/GREETER:
REFRESHMENTS:



JOIN US FOR OUR SPECIAL SERVICES

March 24th at 9:00 and 11:00 am: Join us for our Palm Sunday worship services. Our Sunday School children will begin our 9 am worship with a festive parade of palms.

March 28th at 7 pm: Maundy Thursday Service with Holy Communion we remember Jesus' life and His love for all humankind.

March 31ST Happy Easter!!

Join us at First Church as the Son rises in our hearts and our world today!

7 am Easter Sunrise Youth Service

8 am Easter Breakfast

9 am Easter Festival Service and

10:30 am Easter Contemporary Service

Holy Communion will be served at all services

LOGOS Opportunity:

Did you ever want to know why we do LOGOS or what it's all about? Or did you wonder just what the "four-parts" are and how they all fit together? Well... whether you are currently involved in LOGOS here at First Church or have been in the past or are just curious, we have the perfect opportunity for you. On Saturday, April 27, 9:00-4:00, there will be a training/sharing event held at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Decatur. (Babysitting will be available.) We are collaborating with Westminster and Mt Zion Presbyterian to bring this local event to our church families. The event is open to ANYONE in the 3 congregations to learn more and share ideas that will build Christian relationships and enrich the lives of our children, youth and adults. More details will be available soon. Please pray about this and listen for God's call to you to attend. If you are ready to commit now or have any questions, contact Marsha Mower. (m.mower@sbcglobal.net OR 412-8797).

One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great Hour of Sharing is the Lenten Offering of the UCC Church. This special offering will be collected on March 10, 2013.

Your gifts to OGHS are transformed into gifts of love, joy and restoration, as:

- families displaced by natural disaster or political unrest are comforted by food, shelter and a safe place to begin rebuilding their lives.
- worried mothers caring for their children in times of food insecurity; are transformed to deep peace when sustenance arrives.
- a woman who has had to walk for miles for potable water smiles as she draws fresh water from the new well placed in her community near her home.

As you make your offering to One Great Hour of Sharing this year, remember the numerous ways your gifts bring joy - to you, to all of God's cherished children, and especially to the Holy One. Share cheerfully and abundantly, knowing that you are not only sharing your resources, you are helping to change lives.

May God be made glad by your cheerful generosity!

EASTER FLOWERS

Flowers will once again be available for Easter for those wishing to purchase them. We will have Daffodils, Tulips, Hyacinths, and Lilies to choose from. The order form will be in the upcoming bulletins on Sunday.





Youth Activities

Donations Drive for Dove

The Youth Group will be sponsoring a soap drive during March and April. We will be collecting toiletries and first aid items, all of which will be donated to Dove, Inc. Following is a list of suggested items for donation. You may place your items in one of the boxes by each Church entrance.

Donation Suggestions:

- Soaps (shampoo, body wash, face wash)
- Baby supplies (soaps, diapers, wipes, lotion, powder)
- Toiletries (toothpaste, toothbrushes, dental floss, Q-tips, deodorant)
- Medicine (Ibuprofen, Midol, children's Motrin, Advil, over-the-counter cold medicine)

As always the Youth Group thanks you so much for all of your continued support!



Youth workers and Joe at Sweetheart Dinner



Food Resource Bank

Foods Resource Bank is planning a trip to East Africa in June, 2013. This will include visits to sustainable food programs in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Our 2012 and 2013 growing projects are designated for support of a program in this area. If anyone is interested in traveling with FRB to this part of the world to see firsthand what is happening and how our growing project monies are helping, please contact Sue Bunselmeyer, 877-5926.



CHURCH PRESIDENTS

I am trying to put together a list of all the presidents of the church since 1967. There are five of the early presidents that I can not find a name for. I am missing the years 1967, 1968, 1970, 1971 and 1972. If you know who served for those years, please get in touch with me at 876-1446 or wshuebner.editor@prodigy.net

THANK YOU

We would like to thank you for your donations to our Jump Rope for Heart and Hoops for Heart activities sponsored by the American Heart Association. Mitchell and I raised almost \$400 this year which is a new record for us. We appreciate your thoughtfulness and generosity. We're both excited that we were able to make a difference in the life of those with heart conditions.

Thank you again!!

Jillian and Mitchell Daley



JANUARY 2013 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>Jan 13</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$17,568.17	\$17,568.17
Budget Expense	\$17,685.50	\$17,685.50
Income	\$14,668.00	\$14,668.00
Expenses	\$13,495.96	\$13,495.96

SENIOR APPRECIATION DINNER—1/19/13



Thanks to the youth of the church for a another great Senior Appreciation Dinner



SWEETHEART DINNER—2/16/13

The youth put on a wonderful pasta dinner and silent auction for families of the church on February 16. This was a money making activity for the youth mission trip this summer. A special thank you to the members of the Youth Ministry and their helpers.



VBS 2013

July 21-25

Sunday through Thursday

6:00-8:30 p.m.

All Children age 3 through completed 5th grade are invited to attend!
(preschool children have the option of leaving at 8:05 p.m.)

SAVE THE DATES for VBS 2013 at First Church! It is time to start thinking and praying about your involvement in this year's VBS program. It promises to be another action-packed, fun-filled week. Plans are taking shape, but we are still looking for YOU to help us make it another successful year. Serving as co-directors this year are Marsha Mower and Maureen Ruski. We have a few people who have already committed to join us, but will need lots of additional help to make this a wonderful experience for all involved. 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 *Kingdom Rock – Where Kids Stand Strong for God*. We will meet Truman, Duke, Swift, Sir Valiant and Victoria as they help us with our daily Bible Point, Story and Key Verse. We will have an amazing experience that will help kids (and adults) explore God's incredible love for his children. The dates are Sunday, July 21 – Thursday, July 25 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 Leaders and/or Assistants for Epic Bible Adventures, Chadder's Royal Theatre & Missions, Imagination Station, The King's Kitchen (snacks), Tournament Games, Spotlight VBS (videographer/photographer), Sing & Play Rock (opening), Fanfare Finale (closing) and Pip's Preschool Palace; Crew Leaders and Assistants to shuttle the children through the events each evening; Registration; Decorations and possibly Child Care. 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!

ADULT PROGRAM MINISTRY

Game Night

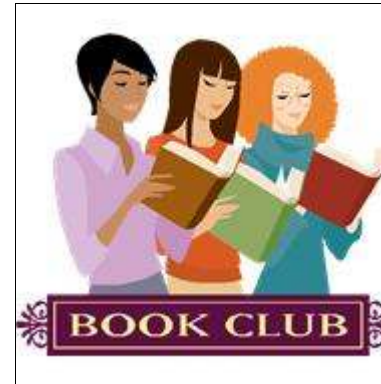
March 16

To help combat the winter blues, Adult Program Ministry is hosting a game night Saturday, March 16 at 6:00. In addition to the fun, we will be providing soups and beverages. Please bring an appetizer, dessert, or munchie to share.

For more information, call Alfreda Tribout (877-9896).

Easter Breakfast

Please join us for Easter Breakfast at 8:00. Reservations are appreciated, but certainly not necessary.



Book Club

The Book Club meets the third Thursday of each month at 1 p.m. Normally, we have met at the church in Fellowship Hall, but we have been considering other locations, so please check before you come. We read and then come together to discuss a book chosen by the group at the previous meeting. We welcome all church members and friends to join us for spirited discussion of good books. Of course, you may come to check us out. To get the most from the discussion you will need to have read the book. The March selection had not been made when this was sent to the newsletter editor, so contact Judi Carpenter or the church office for the book selected by the group. The information will appear in the church bulletin as soon as it is available.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 9:00 Traditional Service 11:00 Contemporary Service	4	5 1-3:00 God's Busy Hands. 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	6 4:15-7:15 LOGOS	7 3:00 Bible Study 5:45 First Ringers	8	9
10 9:00 Traditional Service 11:00 Contemporary Service	11 6:00 Worship/Music Ministry 7:00 Super	12 1-3:00 God's Busy Hands. 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	13 7:30 Adult Choir	14 3:00 Bible Study 5:45 First Ringers	15	16 6:00 Game Night
17 9:00 Traditional Service 11:00 Contemporary Service	18 7:00 Church Council	19 1-3:00 God's Busy Hands. 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	20 4:15-7:15 LOGOS 7:30 Adult Choir	21 3:00 Bible Study 5:45 First Ringers	22	23
24 9:00 Traditional Service 11:00 Contemporary Service	22	26 1-3:00 God's Busy Hands. 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	27 4:15-7:15 LOGOS 7:30 Adult Choir	28 Maundy Thursday Maundy Thursday Service at 7:00	29  Good Friday	30
31 8:00 Easter Breakfast						