

Congregational Comments

Vol. 21 No 3: March 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

**YOU NEVER KNOW
WHEN
IT'S GOING TO BE
EASTER!**

"When is Easter this year?" is a question I frequently hear. Its date "floats" - occurring the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox (the first day of spring).

Easter Sunday, March 27, will soon be upon us. Yet Easter is not something that one can limit to a day on the calendar.

The Bible tell us *'On the Road to Emmaus, Jesus himself came up and walked with a couple of disciples - yet they did not recognize him. It was in the routine task of sharing a meal they finally recognized Jesus.'* Jesus comes up and walks with us, but something keeps us from knowing who it is. Perhaps we don't expect Jesus to be with us here and now, or perhaps we're caught up in our own concerns and activities. Have you ever felt the darkness of a problem overshadowing you like Good Friday - when hopelessness filled the air?

Yet, like the dawn of Easter there comes a Spirit, a strength, a friend, an answer, something that you hadn't noticed before - breathing new life back into you. Yes, right here in our midst of our everyday tasks, Christ is transforming you, the whole world and me. It doesn't matter what day it is, a spring filled day in late March or a summer day in June, "Suddenly, it's Easter!" as God's presence fills you and the world with new hope and possibilities.

Remember your "Easters," those times you have felt Christ especially close to you - give thanks to God for them. Let them remind you that Christ is with you always - especially today. Consider how you can share the "Easter" spirit with someone else, through your smile, your listening, your comforting words, your friendship, your help, sharing your talents and resources... your faith and prayers.

Every day is Easter as we are born anew to be creatures

of God's love, sharing the Good News of Easter, and helping others experience the miracle of God's transforming love in their lives.

JOIN US FOR OUR SPECIAL SERVICES

March 20th 9 AM: Join us for our Palm Sunday service at 9 AM Our Sunday School children will begin our worship with a festive parade of palms.. We also celebrate Palm Sunday at our 11 AM service. Join us for this special day celebrating Christ coming to Jerusalem and to us!

March 24th 7 PM Maundy Thursday Service

March 27th Happy Easter!!

JOIN US at First Congregational UCC for Easter Services as Jesus, God's Son rises in our hearts and our world today!

7 am Easter Sunrise Youth Service

8 am Delicious Easter Breakfast

9 am Easter Festival Service and

10:30 am Easter Contemporary Service

Holy Communion will be served at all Easter services

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 to all creation. Amen. Have a blessed Easter!

Pastor Dave

KROGER NEWS

Your supporters (46 households) who shopped at Kroger between 2015-10-01 and 2015-12-31 (Cycle 2015, Qtr 4) have contributed to your \$341.80 total donation. Your organization will be receiving a Kroger check in this amount within 30 days from 2016-01-21.

Jeanette Flenner

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Women's Fellowship will meet on 3rd Friday, March 18th at 12:00 noon for a Saint Patrick's Day luncheon. We will provide the meal and a donation of \$5.00 will be collected from each lady attending. Please let us know if you plan to come so we have enough places set up and enough food!!

RSVP by March 15th to one of the Officers...Darla 877-7008, Ellen W. 875-0835, Martha 877-7468 or Norma 877-3952. Friends are always welcome. We will have a lovely day and looking forward to seeing many of you there.



OUR SYMPATHY...

to the family of Judy Koyak. Judy was beloved as Mike's wife and Katy's mother and our love and prayers are with them. Judy had been the Youth Director of our church at one time and an active member of our church. Judy passed from this life to life eternal on February 4, 2016.

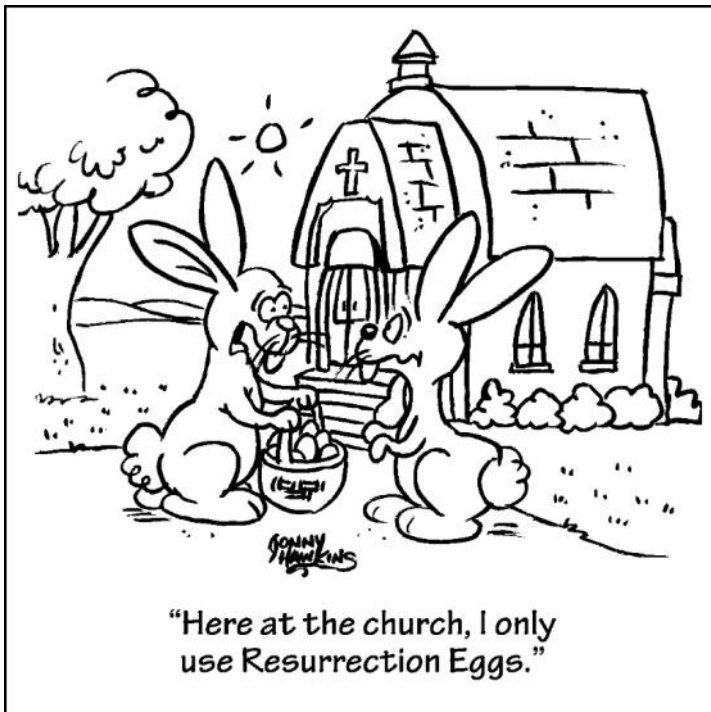
We give thanks for Judy's life and that she is now with Jesus in life eternal. We pray God's love and support be with her family and friends.

"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



Photo by Clarence Elliott

Judy Koyak in First Congregational Church
3465 North MacArthur, Decatur, Illinois
September 19, 2001



SENIOR DINNER

January 30, 2016



Photos by Dave Carpender

SWEETHEARTS DINNER

February 13, 2016



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
		1 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Adult Choir 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	2 4:45-7:15
6 Pastoral Care Card Sale One Great Hour of Sharing Collection	7	8 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Adult Choir 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	9 4:45-7:15
13 Church Services 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	14 5:30 Admin 7:00 Property	15 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	16 4:45-7:15
20 Palm Sunday Service	21 7:00 Church Council	22 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	23 4:45-7:15
27 7:00 Sunrise Service 8:00 Breakfast 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	28	29 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	30 4:45-7:15

	Thu	Fri	Sat
5 LOGOS	3 5:45 First Ringers	4	5
5 LOGOS	10 5:45 First Ringers	11	12
5 LOGOS	17 5:45 First Ringers	18	19
5 LOGOS	24 7:00 Maundy Thursday Service	25	26
5 LOGOS	31 5:45 First Ringers		

CHILDREN'S NEWS!

We have been having fun this winter! On January 27th, we had a Star Wars Party and Jeanette Flenner had some fun light saber and Nerf gun games for the kids. Thanks Miss Jeanette!

Then, on February 14th, Ashley Lofland had a fun Valentine Penguin craft for the children. Thanks Miss Ashley!

Next up will be our Palm Processional and Indoor Easter Egg Hunt on March 20th! Please join us at 8:45 in the Fellowship Hall to prepare for the Palm Processional and dress up in robes. You can wave the Palms, sing along during children's time and then be sure to meet at 10:00 for breakfast and our Egg Hunt.

Coming up April 17th will be our LEGO's Party and display! Maybe you can win a ribbon for your LEGO creation brought in! And we'll create some that morning!

Hope to see you all soon!
Carol Robertson

The Decatur Area Church Women United

The Decatur Area Church Women United will meet on Friday, March 4th at 1:00 P.M. for World Day of Prayer Celebration, at the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, 530 W. Mound Rd.

All are welcome to attend this service.

Darla Weltmer

JANUARY 2016 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>Jan 16</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income		
Budget Expense	No data available yet	
Income		
Expenses		

From Your Church President.....

I am honored to serve again in 2016 as your church president! My prayer is that we will all work together to discern what God is calling us to do and be this year and into the future.

We have a long, rich history at First Church that will continue for many years to come. There are many things we are blessed to do very well – quality programs for our children and youth, even though numbers are small; life-changing outreach programs in our community and the world; “caring” projects like our prayer shawls/blankets, cards, funeral meals and home visits; strong relationships across multiple generations; a new and successful stewardship program; not to mention two different styles of worship with music and messages that touch lives.

Like many other mainline churches, we have experienced a decline in membership over the past several years and the majority of our “active” congregation, is aging. But, this is not necessarily bad news. In fact, the “good news” is we have the opportunity to look at who we have become, who we are today and work together to be about God’s work in the way that best fits with the “new, smaller” us!

I hope you will join me in lifting up and celebrating our rich history; letting go of the things that bog us down and prevent us from moving forward; opening our minds and hearts to possible new ways to organize and structure ourselves, utilizing our available resources better; and embracing the “new” church God is calling us to be.

I look forward to working with you all in 2016. God bless each of you!

Marsha Mower

First Church Book Club

First Church Book Club will not meet in February. Our next meeting will be Thursday, March 24th (not the normal fourth Thursday). We meet in the lounge at 1:15 p.m. We will be discussing *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd. If you've ever thought about joining a book club, this would be a great time to check one out. Our meetings usually last about an hour and are low-key discussions. If you have questions, please contact Judi Carpenter (875-0092), who will be happy to answer them and encourage you to come to a meeting and see what we're all about!

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

This annual special offering will be collected during the month of March. Offering envelopes will be distributed in the bulletins for several Sundays.

The money collected for this offering will support the United Church of Christ's efforts to aid in human crises throughout the world. It will help people who have suffered from natural disasters like: floods, earthquakes, storms, famine and other disasters.

Today a great human disaster is refugees fleeing from war and oppression. Not only the Syrian refugees that we hear so much about in the media but also refugees in other parts of the world. One Great Hour of Sharing will help supply basic human needs for refugees around the world.

Please consider a generous donation for this important opportunity to share Christ with those who are most in need.

Mark Schleeter
Outreach Committee

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

Primrose Retirement Community

Claude Young—Room 228

Lois Shelton—Room 132

Imboden Gardens

Harriette Horn—Room 120

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

Easter Sunrise Service
Offered by the FCUCC Youth
Sunday, March 27, 2016
7:00 a.m.

Thank You

The Youth Ministry and the Youth of First Congregational United Church of Christ want to thank you for your support. Your help with fund raising, food donations, and donating your time makes it possible for the Youth to do many things for the community and mission work.





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. Mitchell Daley
Joe Flies
4. Andy Baldwin
Don Carter
12. Erica Moster
13. Tucker Clark
15. Edna Palmer
16. Mary Hamman
17. Bekki Moore
18. Carol Cooley
22. Roger Kahila
Clinton Mueller
Wesley Pietsch
24. Melissa Boldizar
25. Jillian Daley
27. Kathy Ann Baker
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!

10. David & Marlene Gant
15. David & Judi Carpenter
17. Wallace & Laurel Lorey
28. William & Madeline Mitchell



FIRST SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

MARCH 6

LITURGIST: Amy Leman

FLOWERS: Roger & Melinda
Redman

COFFEE: Tom & Paula Cords

USHERS/GREETER:

MARCH 13

LITURGIST: Ellen Starace

FLOWERS: Sharon Burbes

COFFEE: Sheila Mannweiler,
Betty Cummings

USHERS/GREETER:

MARCH 20

LITURGIST: Marilee Gordon

FLOWERS: Palm Branches

COFFEE: Kristin Hargrove

USHERS/GREETER:

MARCH 24

LITURGIST: Bobbie Taylor

USHERS/GREETER:

MARCH 27

LITURGIST: Mindy Bunselmeyer

FLOWERS: Easter Flowers

COFFEE: Jim & Jodi Baldwin

USHERS/GREETER:

SECOND SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

MARCH 6

USHER/GREETER: Wes Pietsch

REFRESHMENTS: Wes Pietsch

MARCH 13

USHER/GREETER: Missy
Boldizar

REFRESHMENTS: Missy
Boldizar

MARCH 20

USHER/GREETER: Rudy
Voyles, Shirley Zimmerman

REFRESHMENTS: Rudy
Voyles, Shirley Zimmerman

MARCH 27

USHER/GREETER: Mark &
Jeanette Flenner

REFRESHMENTS: Mark &
Jeanette Flenner



ORDER FORM FOR EASTER FLOWERS

Please put form in collection plate or take to Church Office

EASTER FLOWERS

You may choose from the following selections for your flowers on Easter Sunday.

__ I would like #__ lily/lilies @ \$12 each

__ I would like #__ tulip/tulips @ \$12 each

__ I would like #__ daffodil/daffodils @ \$12 each

__ I would like #__ hyacinth/hyacinths @ \$12 each

__ In lieu of flowers, I would like my donation made to The Memorial Fund.

__ In lieu of flowers, I would like my donation made to The Scholarship Fund.

PLEASE PRINT

In Honor of _____

And/Or

In Memory of _____

Your name _____

TO ORDER: Complete this form and remit with payment to the church office or the offering plate. Deadline to order is **March 13, 2016**.

Please make separate checks for donations going to scholarship, memorial funds, and Easter Flowers.

Please pick up your flowers after Easter Service.