

Congregational Comments

Vol. 22 No 5: May 2017

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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

Have you ever noticed how Bible translations can sometimes differ on the use of the words “temptation,” “testing,” and “trial”? Perhaps you haven’t. Let me offer you some examples. The traditional version of the Lord’s Prayer says, “Lead us not into temptation,” but a common modern translation says, “Save us from the time of trial.” Again, when Jesus was sent into the wilderness to face Satan, some translations say he was “tested” and others “tempted.” In fact, translators render Jesus quoting Scripture back to the devil either as “You shall not tempt the Lord your God” or “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”

Which translations are right, and why do they differ? Well, here’s the issue: In the original language of the New Testament (Greek), the word for “testing,” “temptation,” and “trial” is the same! The only way to know for sure which idea is being conveyed in the Bible is to understand the context, and even then it can be quite tricky. That’s because the Bible sees all three as being intimately related – so much so that they, more or less, render the same outcome in the lives of believers. Before I explain, let me offer you an illustration about how the terms are distinguished in English.

Temptation occurs whenever we would strongly like to do something we know would displease God or be harmful to ourselves and others. Testing happens whenever God places challenges in our way to develop our character – when God forces choices on us that reveal our level of spiritual maturity. Trials take place when adversity enters our life from the outside and we can choose either faith or fear and doubt.

For example, we might be tempted to cheat on our taxes, thinking it’s unlikely we’ll be audited if we claim an extra deduction or two. Let’s suppose we did the right thing. God might soon after test our character, allowing our tax refund check to come back \$500 too much in our favor – are we going to send it back? Okay. Let’s say we did the right thing again. A trial could then be upon us if, after having done everything right, the IRS in error sends us a letter saying we owe back taxes, and we face months or years of wrangling trying to sort things out. In

the first instance, our inward disposition to advance ourselves tempted us. In the second, a moral dilemma is thrust upon us from an outward source, testing us. In the final case, difficulty came upon us from the outside by no fault of our own, trying our patience and our faith.

You can see then how the concepts differ. But can you also see, depending on our response, how the outcome of all three might have the same effect on our spiritual condition? If we were to cheat on our taxes, keep a refund that wasn't rightfully ours, or have a complete and utter breakdown battling the IRS, our spiritual condition would deteriorate. We would become weaker in our faith and have to engage in serious soul searching. But, supposing we filed our taxes honestly, returned what wasn't ours, and, even though frustrated, didn't allow dealing with bureaucrats to break down our character and demeanor, we would grow stronger spiritually.

When reading the Bible or saying prayers, I encourage you to occasionally exchange "temptation," "testing," and "trial." While such exchanges may not always be completely accurate, they do give us a fuller meaning of the biblical term. Doing so can help affirm that God is always working things for our good, whether it's a hardship that exists do to our own desires or that is inflicted upon us from the outside. See how it works with this verse:

1 Corinthians 10:13 – "No temptation/testing/trial has overtaken you except what is common to humankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted/tested/tried beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted/tested/tried, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."

INSTALLAION SERVICE FOR PASTOR TRAVIS

You Are Invited to the Installation Service for Pastor Ryan Travis on Sunday, May 7 at 3:00 p.m., with a reception to follow. Please join us for this celebration in the life of First Church!

PLAYMATES NEWS

We celebrated Easter in April, by making "resurrection rolls". They baked during Chapel Time while Pastor Travis taught us the real reason we celebrate Easter. Afterwards, we all got to eat them together. The rolls were empty in the middle, just like the tomb. We also had an Easter egg hunt to finish the week.

We are having our annual Mother's Day tea on May 11. If you have any tiered serving trays or teapots we could borrow, please call Alfreda Tribout (877-9896). We'll be very careful and only the adults will be handling them, however, we wouldn't be comfortable with a family heirloom or irreplaceable treasure.

The school year is coming to a close at Playmates. It's been a great learning experience for all of us, children and teachers alike. Our graduation program is May 17th at 6:30, followed by the last day of school. We're looking ahead to next year, which will be our **fiftieth**. If you know of anyone looking for a great learning environment for their 3 or 4 year old, please tell them about Playmates.



Pastor Ryan and the children

ELECTRONIC GIVING REMINDER

ENJOY THE CONVENIENCE OF ELECTRONIC GIVING

First Church wants to remind you that we offer electronic giving as a way to automate your regular weekly offering. Electronic giving offers convenience for individual congregation members and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation.

E-giving is used to automatically transfer funds from your checking or saving account to the church's bank account.

Just as you rely upon receiving income on a regular basis, First Church relies on your regular contributions. First Church appreciates the efforts of congregation members to make consistent donations throughout the year — especially during popular winter and summer travel periods. To assist you, the church provides a convenient electronic giving option for setting up regular contributions. Please contact the church office for details.



Pastor Ryan and the children

From Your Church President.....

Peggy Mennel began as our custodian in early April. She continues as our Office Manager and adds this position to her work with us. We are blessed to have her in this additional capacity!

WOMEN'S SPRING BANQUET

Please save the evening of June 2, 2017 for the Women's Spring Banquet. More details to follow ____





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**

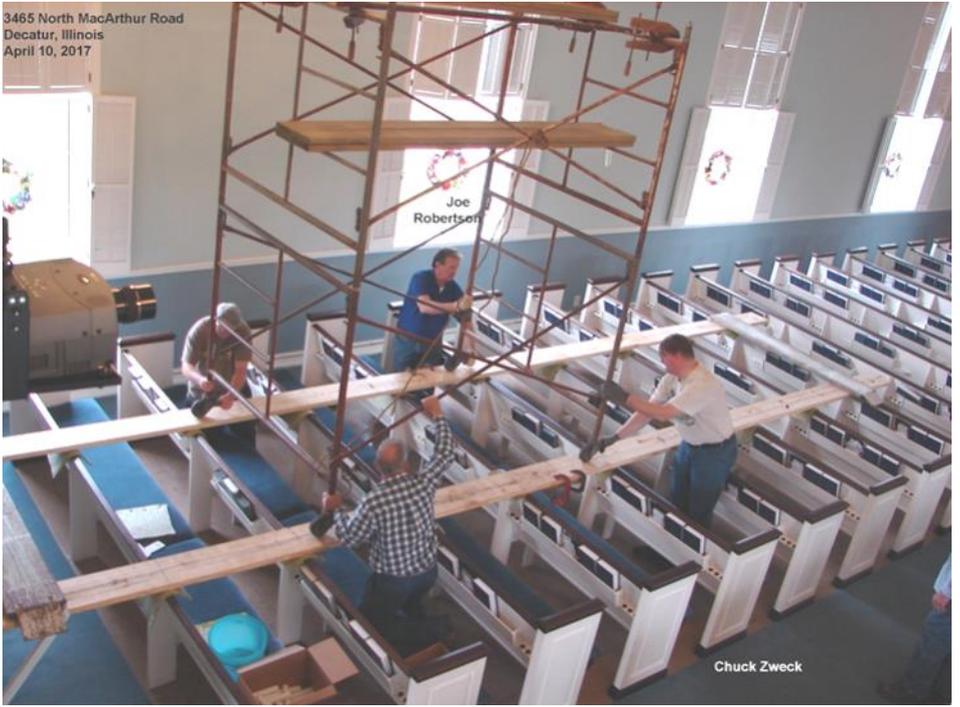
SAVE THE DATES for VBS 2017 at First Church! Our theme is MAKER FUN FACTORY – Created by GOD – Built for a Purpose. We will meet Decker, Tina, Bubba, Skyler and Abbee as they help us with our daily Bible Point, Story and Key Verse. We will have a week full of jaw-dropping experiences that will spark 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.

Leaders are needed in the following areas: Adults for Bible Discovery, Snack Factory, Spotlight VBS (videographer/photographer), Sound Wave Sing & Play, Funshop Finale, 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!

Director Marsha Mower

3465 North MacArthur Road
Decatur, Illinois
April 10, 2017



Joe
Robertson

Chuck Zweck

Photos by Clarence Elliott



Chuck Zweck, 3465 North MacArthur
Road, Decatur, Illinois April 10, 2017

LOGOS YOUTH NEWS

LOGOS at First Church recently completed its sixteenth year. Highlights from our last night and closing banquet include: a theme of *An Attitude of Gratitude*; a laughter-filled time for our children and youth (and adults!) participating in bubble-wrap events (sumo wrestling, crab-walking and riding tricycles over bubble-wrap tracks, etc.); 8 children/youth and 20 adults/guests enjoying a delicious dinner of pot roast and trimmings; celebrating the perfect attendance of James Huckile, Andrew Mower and Lexy Oliver; presenting our dedicated volunteers a children/youth decorated flower pot and card. MANY, MANY, MANY thanks to our volunteer staff who unselfishly gave of their time and talents, our children and youth who participated and their families for "loaning" them to us each week! Over the program year we served 11 children and 4 youth, along with 18 adults (and 2 willing to substitute, but never called upon). We now look forward to our planning for year seventeen! Our LOGOS ministry team continues to give thanks to God for the blessing of serving First Church in the very important way

NEW LIGHTS IN THE SANCTUARY

The Property Ministry recently changed to long-life LED bulbs in all the sanctuary chandeliers, the balcony chandelier and the chandelier by the office. In addition, a new dimmer system was installed for the sanctuary lights. Willis Parker planned and directed the light bulb changing process and was assisted by Dave Mahr, Gary Baker, Chuck Zweck, Jim Baldwin and Joe Robertson.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
	1	2 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	3 7:00 Cho
7 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	8 5:30 Admin Meeting	9 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	10 7:00 Cho
14 Music Sunday 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	15 5:30 Council of Ministry Teams	16 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	17 Playmate Day— Graduca 7:00 Cho
21 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	22	23 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	24 7:00 Cho
28 9:00 Traditional 11:00 Contemporary Worship	29	30 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	31 7:00 Cho

	Thu	Fri	Sat
ir	4 5:45 First Ringers	5 12:00 Decatur Area Church Women United	6
ir	11 5:45 First Ringers	12	13
es Last tion ir	18 1:00 Book Club 5:45 First Ringers Cleaning Bells & Celebration &	19	20
ir	25	26	27
ir			

THANK YOU FROM MEALS ON WHEELS

Hello Faithful Volunteers,

I wanted to make sure to wish you all a blessed Easter and Passover. This is both a solemn and a joyous time...and makes me a little reflective. So I went into the records and did a little reflecting:

2014 –over 49,000 meals delivered here in Macon County
2015 –over 53,000 meals delivered here in Macon County
2016 –over 65,000 meals delivered here in Macon County
Our current ‘year’ end June 30th, so in 2017 we are on track to deliver over 79,000 meals.

Those numbers stagger me, although it’s not the numbers so much as what they represent. 79,000 smiles given to a lonely senior. 79,000 times a homebound person in our own community was handed the physical proof that someone cares.

I received a call yesterday afternoon from a client on Route 10. She and her husband both receive meals. They don’t have any family in the area and the husband struggles with some serious health issues. She REALLY wanted me to know that all the volunteers that bring their lunches have been so pleasant and friendly, always nice, always smiling. She said it’s a terrific feeling to see them at the door. I promised her I would pass along to you her gratitude.

Rollanda Pinckard
Volunteer Coordinator
Meals on Wheels of Macon County

First Congregational's turn to deliver Meals on Wheels is the week of May 15 through May 19. Meals are picked up at Decatur Memorial Hospital about 10:00 AM and routes take about one hour to deliver. If you would like to participate in this outreach activity one or more days, please contact Sue Bunselmeyer, 877-5926.

To All Meals on Wheels Volunteers, Past & Present

We are celebrating **50 YEARS** of volunteers delivering **Meals on Wheels in Macon County**

We invite you to join us **May 10th** for our *Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast Buffett*, catered by DMH. It will be in Classrooms A&B at DMH and you are welcome to come anytime between 8 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

There will be a *short* presentation at 8:30 and a drawing for Kroger Gift Cards.

Everyone receives a *Thank You* flower.

For overflow parking use Lot C.
Shuttle Service will be provided by DMH.

We look forward to seeing you



The Baker Family and the Easter Bunny during the Easter Egg Hunt

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED

Hello!

Church Women United is a group formed in 1939 with the purpose of encouraging women to come together in fellowship to witness their unity and faith in Jesus Christ as Divine Lord and Savior and we have gone out in every neighborhood as instruments of his reconciling LOVE. When I joined this group back in 1975 when we moved here I attended their meetings and have served as President of this group as well as the State President and various offices over the past 42 years. We have been asked to host their May Friendship Day Celebration and I hope some of you will volunteer to help me host this Celebration. I will need kitchen help to serve refreshments and ushers to take up the Offering and attendance would be great representing OUR Church members! Please let me know if you would/could help me out. Thanks

DACWU

The Decatur Area Church Women United will hold their May Friendship Day at our Church on Friday May 5th at 1:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. The Celebration will feature "Kindling New Fires of LOVE". Churches participating include Church of the Brethren, Church of the Living God Temple #2, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, Morningside Church of Christ, First United Methodist Church and our Church.

MARCH 2017 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>March 17</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$18,288.92	\$
Budget Expense	\$17,714.72	\$
Income	\$	\$
Expenses	\$	\$

FFDO

Come and celebrate Cinco de Mayo at Casa Fuentes at 6:00 on May 5th. Isn't it nice how that works out for First Friday Dinner Out. Let me know if you plan on attending. Email sharmison2002@yahoo.com or call 877-4775.

Sandy Harmison

THANK YOU

Thank you so much to Rita Whitney, mother of Mary Beck, for the beautiful floral wreaths that adorn our sanctuary windows. We truly appreciate her thoughtfulness and willingness to brighten our days with the colorful promise of spring.

SCHOLARSHIP

Memorial Committee Scholarship applications for 2017 are available on the table outside of the Church Office.

Completed applications must be received in the Church Office by the deadline of 3 PM, Wednesday, May 31, 2017.

**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

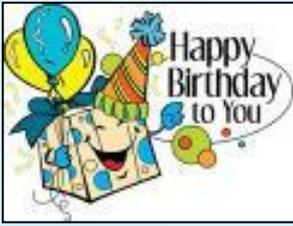




Cooks for the Easter Breakfast

ANOTHER GREAT EASTER BREAKFAST





God bless you on your birthday and each day the whole year through. May all His blessings bring you joy in everything you do.

3. Carol Robertson
7. Andrew Butts
9. Dale Capshaw
12. Jessica Robertson
17. Martha Crookshank
20. Todd Wernecke
21. Melinda Bunselmeyer
Debbie Whitney
22. Emily Carter
Emma Cordts
23. Matthew Cordts
27. Cameron Malone
30. James Jordan

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. Gerald & Peggy Ruff
2. Todd & Jennie Wernecke
25. Skip & Marsha Mower
26. Ronald & Janet Brownfield
29. James & Marilyn Jordan
30. Mark & Susan Schleeter



FIRST SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

MAY 7

LITURGIST: Chuck Zweck

FLOWERS: Joe & Carol
Robertson

COFFEE: Darla & Lynn Weltmer

USHERS/GREETER: Chuck
Zweck , Ev Kuhn, Tom & Paula
Cordts

MAY 14

LITURGIST: Dee Wenneker

FLOWERS:

COFFEE: Ted & Darby Mitchell

USHERS/GREETER: Ted &
Darby Mitchell , Frank & Shelly
Smith

MAY 21

LITURGIST: Bill Huebner

FLOWERS: Gerry & Peggy Ruff

COFFEE: Martha Crookshank,
Betty Cummings

USHERS/GREETER: Ev Kuhn,
Robert & Penny Butts, Sandi
Pleasants

MAY 28

LITURGIST: Sharon Burbes

FLOWERS: Dave & Pat Mahr

COFFEE: Kristin Hargrove

USHERS/GREETER: Marsha
Mower, Don & Dee Wenneker,
Darla Weltmer

SECOND SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

MAY 7

USHER/GREETER: Mark &
Jeanette Flenner

REFRESHMENTS: Mark &
Jeanette Flenner

MAY 14

USHER/GREETER: Ruby
Voyles/ Shirley Zimmerman

REFRESHMENTS: Ruby Voyles/
Shirley Zimmerman

MAY 21

USHER/GREETER: Joe Moretti/
Maureen Ruski

REFRESHMENTS: Joe Moretti/
Maureen Ruski

MAY 28

USHER/GREETER: Betty
Wheatley

REFRESHMENTS: Betty
Wheatley



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.