

Congregational Comments



Vol. 23 No. 5: May 2018

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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.

Inside this issue:

| | | | | | |
|---|----------|-----------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| A Note from Pastor Ryan | 2 | Foods Resource Bank | 6 | Children's Activities | 9 |
| Events | 3 | FFDO | 7 | Happenings | 10 |
| Coffee Maker Replacement | 4 | Finance Notes | 7 | Birthdays & Anniversaries | 11 |
| Spring Mother/ Daughter/ Friends | 4 | Youth Activities | 8 | First Church Sunday Morning | 12 |
| LOGOS | 5 | Senior Appreciation Dinner | 8 | Calendar | 13 |

A Note from Pastor Ryan



Pastor Ryan

Redefining Your Obstacles

Sometimes, we go through situations in our lives that seem unfair: Someone spreads gossip about you. A friend goes back on a promise made to you, and now you're left footing the bill. A spouse or partner leaves you for another person – they break your heart. You have the most work experience, yet you are passed over for the new job. You get caught up in someone else's tax problem, and now Uncle Sam is after you. The list goes on and on.

We've all been there, and we know how it feels. There's anger and hurt, resentment and fear. We can become worried and wonder how we're ever going to get out of this mess. In exasperation, we throw our hands up to God and ask, "Why me? What did I do to deserve this? It's not right!"

Know this: There's nothing happening in your life that is a surprise to God. When God ordained a plan for your life, God knew exactly what you'd go through. These difficulties and challenges we face, as uncomfortable and unfair as they are, will work out in our favor, if we continue to trust God and walk by faith.

As we've discussed before, the biblical term for "test" "trial" and "temptation" is the same. When there's something out there that we enjoy doing but we know it's bad for us, that inward draw we feel is called "temptation." It's a battle that begins on the inside, where it's either defeated, or it outwardly manifests itself in sinful behavior when we've yielded to it. By contrast, "trials" are hardships that come on us from the outside – illness, people wronging us, accidents, and unfortunate circumstances in life. It's external oppression and opposition that causes us to struggle inwardly as we process what to do about it.

Sometimes it's hard to tell the difference between a trial and a temptation, so it's fitting that the same word is used for both. I want to encourage all of us to think about whatever it is that we experience – inward temptation to sin or outward oppression that causes us stress – in a different light. I want us to think of them as tests.

A test is something God uses to transform and mold us into the people God would have us be. Just as a muscle doesn't grow and get stronger unless it faces resistance, so it is true for our spiritual selves. Viewing what we're going through as a test sanctioned by God, rather than our being victims of someone else's antics, takes away power of those we fret are causing us harm.

Yes, something might be tempting you to sin. Yes, other people might be putting you through a trial. But what good does it do to lament about those things? Redefine them instead. In the book of Job, Satan approaches God and speaks evil against him. Job was a very righteous man, and Satan mocked God, saying Job only loved the LORD because he had a comfortable life. The Scripture says the God allowed Satan to afflict Job in every way, though he placed limits on how far the Enemy could go. The Devil inflicted temptation after temptation and trial after trial upon Job. But Job didn't go around blaming other people for his problems. He recognized that what he was experiencing was a test. He didn't understand it. He didn't like it. Ultimately, however, Job passed the test. He didn't give up his faith or love of the LORD just because he encountered hardship. He became increasingly awestruck by the power and provision of God, and he emerged stronger and most blessed than ever before.

The next time something unfair happens to you, don't throw a pity party for yourself. Don't get bogged down in depression or resentment. Instead, faithfully engage God, saying, "Lord, I don't know why this is happening, but I trust that you are working this, some way, for my good. Thank you for your provision. Give me the strength to endure and the wisdom to grow as you would have me."

EVENTS

MEALS ON WHEELS VOLUNTEER BREAKFAST

All Meals on Wheels volunteers are invited to an Appreciation Breakfast on Wednesday, May 9. The breakfast buffet will be catered by Decatur Memorial Hospital and will be in Classrooms A-C at DMH. Volunteers may stop in anytime between 8 AM and 9:30 AM. There will be a short presentation at 8:30 AM. For overflow parking, use Lot C. No RSVP is necessary. If you have ever helped to deliver Meals on Wheels, please feel free to attend.



SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Memorial committee scholarship applications for 2018 are available on the table outside of the church office. Completed applications must be received in the Church Office by the deadline of 3 P.M. Thursday, May 31, 2018.

Coffee Maker Replacement



Replacing Coffee Maker in Kitchen

The old coffee maker in the kitchen has died. It was at least 20+ years old and was in need of replacement. Last Sunday it stopped for good after making three pots of coffee. A new modern coffee maker will cost about \$800. Church Council has decided to purchase a new coffee maker.

We are asking member of the congregation to help pay for the new coffee maker. Anyone interested in contributing to the purchase of the new coffee maker can use the envelopes in the pews, mark them for the coffee maker and drop them in offering plate, drop it off in the church office or give it to any member of the Church Council.

Thank you for any help you can give for this purchase.

SPRING MOTHER/DAUGHTER/FRIENDS BANQUET



Please plan to join us on May 11, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. We will have dinner and a presentation on Honey Bees from members of a local Apiary Group. Tickets on sale between services on April 22nd & 29th and May 6th or available in the church office. Come and see what the "Buzz" is all about!

LOGOS



On Sunday, April 8, a LOGOS Team bowled for Kid's Sake at Spare Time Lanes. The bowlers were: Christina Huckile, Katie Koyak, James Huckile, Chuck Zweck, and Mark Flenner. Thanks to the generosity of our congregants and online support, our team raised \$600 for The Big Brothers Big Sisters of Macon Co.

Photo by Jeanette Flenner

Foods Resource Bank



Our FRB growing project supports this program in India

Deltinora Has Transformed Her Land And Her Life



Deltinora rarely grew enough on her small plot of land to feed her family until she joined a Self-Help Group (SHG) involved in the India Umsning program. Now there's enough food and income from selling what the family doesn't need to eat that her husband no longer has to work as a day laborer to make ends meet. In fact, her whole household of seven is committed to becoming the most progressive farmers in the village to share what they've learned and inspire others.

Through her SHG, Deltinora has attended countless training events, from effective kitchen gardening, water harvesting, composting, and raising small livestock to cultivating rice and improving sloping land to grow additional crops. She also has access to government workshops on such topics as food processing. She used to have to buy any vegetables she needed at the local market, but now the family only eats what she grows, including beans, mustard leaves, red chilies, cabbages, yams, and foods used locally. She's even raising pigs for profit!

Deltinora and her family are in the process of identifying their own plot of sloping land to cultivate now that they know it can be farmed effectively. Her hard work and dedication have impressed the members of her SHG enough to elect her as their secretary, and she makes it a point to encourage other women she meets to take part in SHG activities.

FFDO

On May 4 (Star Wars Day), we will meet at Tuscany on the corner of Pershing Road and Martin Luther King Drive at 6:00. Come join us in good food and conversation. Let me know if you can come.

Sandy Harmison

Finance Notes

MARCH 2018 FINANCIAL REPORT

| | <u>Mar 18</u> | <u>YTD</u> |
|----------------|---------------|------------|
| Budget Income | \$17,420.92 | \$ No Data |
| Budget Expense | \$17,269.15 | \$ |
| Income | \$ | \$ |
| Expenses | \$ | \$ |



Youth Activities

Children and Youth Summer Outreach Project

Children, Youth, and Outreach ministries are teaming up for a summer long project to help with disaster relief in this country and around the world.

We will be collecting items in creative ways throughout the summer for School and Hygiene kits as a part of Church World Services disaster relief efforts around the world.

A list of specific items needed will be posted and published as well as a poster showing the progress towards our goal of 50 School kits and 50 Hygiene kits.

Keep your eyes and ears open for more information during the summer to be a part of this wonderful and worthwhile project.

Senior Appreciation Dinner



Susan Daley and Youth



Seniors Enjoying Dinner

More pictures on next page

Children's Activities



Easter Egg Hunt with the Rabbit

On March 25th the children were part of the Children's Palm Sunday Processional at 9:00 and 11:00 services and then at 10:15 had the Children's Easter Egg Hunt.

Photo by Carol Robertson



Workers at the Senior Appreciation Dinner

Photos by Dave Carpender

Happenings

FFDO

Tuscany

Friday,

May 4

6:00 pm



God's Busy Hands

Tuesdays

1:00 - 3:00 pm



God's Busy Hands

Choir

Wednesdays

7:00 pm



Sing With Us

First Ringers

Thursdays

5:45 pm



Mother/Daughter/ Friends Banquet

Friday, May 11

6:00 pm



Admin Meeting

Monday, May 14

5:30 pm

Council of Ministry Teams

Monday, May 21

5:30 pm

May 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.

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

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

Church Members who are Homebound or in Assisted Living or Nursing Homes

For the last year or so, I have been putting the names and address of member who are in Assisted Living or Nursing Homes in the newsletter. However, after starting work on a risk management system for the church, it has been decided that it is not safe to put these names and addresses in the newsletter. Instead, a list of these members will be available in the Church Office. This list will also include Homebound members. If you would like the name and or address of a member in an Assisted Living, Nursing Home or Homebound please call or visit the church office. Please give us a short time to get the lists together.

First Church Sunday Morning

| | Date | 9:00 AM Service | 11:00 AM Service |
|---|--------|---|-------------------------------|
|  LITURGISTS | May 6 | Dee Wenneker | |
| | May 13 | Chuck Zweck | |
| | May 20 | Mindy Bunselmeyer | |
| | May 27 | Darla Weltmer | |
|  | May 6 | Rob & Kathy Moore | |
| | May 13 | Joe & Carol Robertson | |
| | May 20 | Gerry & Peggy Ruff | |
| | May 27 | Dave & Pat Mahr | |
|  | May 6 | Don & Dee Wenneker | Sandy Harmison |
| | May 13 | Tom & Paula Cordts | Shirley Zimmerman/Ruby Voyles |
| | May 20 | Sheila Mannweiler | Wes Pietch |
| | May 27 | Kristin Hargrove | Mark & Jeanette Flenner |
|  USHERS | May 6 | Dave & Marlene Gant, Darla Weltmer, Gary Weiss | Sandy Harmison |
| | May 13 | Ellen Starace, Kristen Hargrove, Tom & Paula Cordts | Shirley Zimmerman/Ruby Voyles |
| | May 20 | Darla Weltmer, Dave Carpenter, Pat & Margie Malone | Wes Pietch |
| | May 27 | Paul & Ruth DeBruine, Mike & Toni Longstreet | Mark & Jeanette Flenner |

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

May Calendar

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|---|------------------------------|--|--|-----|
| | | 1 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-Anon 8:00 AA | 2 7:00 Choir Practice | 3 2:15 Girl Scouts 5:45 1st Ringers | 4 6:00 MCYP | 5 |
| 6 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellow ship Hour 11:00 Con- temporary | 7 | 8 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-Anon 8:00 AA | 9 7:00 Choir Practice | 10 2:15 Girl Scouts 5:45 1st Ringers | 11 6:00 MCYP 6:00 Mother/ Daughter/ Friends Banquet | 12 |
| 13 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellow ship Hour 11:00 Con- temporary | 14 5:30 Admin 7:00 Property Meeting | 15 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-Anon 8:00 AA | 16 7:00 Choir Practice | 17 2:15 Girl Scouts 5:45 1st Ringers | 18 6:00 MCYP | 19 |
| 20 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellow ship Hour 11:00 Con- temporary | 21 5:30 Council Of Ministry Teams | 22 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-Anon 8:00 AA | 23 7:00 Choir Practice | 24 2:15 Girl Scouts 5:45 1st Ringers | 25 6:00 MCYP | 26 |
| 27 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellow ship Hour 11:00 Con- temporary | 28 | 29 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-Anon 8:00 AA | 30 7:00 Choir Practice | 31 2:15 Girl Scouts 5:45 1st Ringers | | |



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.