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

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Congegational Comments

Vol. 17 No 6: June 2012

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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

11:15-12:00 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.

Congregational Comments is a publication of 1st Congregational UCC, 3465 N. MacArthur Rd., Decatur, IL. 62526-1450. Published monthly, it is used to keep its members informed about programs of the church and to report news about First Church's people



Pastor Dave Taylor

PRAYING OUR EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES

How often do we take time to reflect upon the experiences of our everyday lives while gently asking the question, "God, how and where were you with me today?" Too often we rush through our day and headlong into bed without breaking stride. Perhaps we may not live the rushed life, but we simply live our days without giving much thought to prayer or God. But how much we could learn if we began the practice of daily reflection.

When we examine our daily experience with a quiet and prayerful heart, often we become aware of occasions when we are being blessed and nurtured by God without knowing it. Perhaps a kind word from a stranger or friend gave us hope or delight, or something beautiful caught our eye or ear. Perhaps a task well done brought a satisfying sense of using our gifts to do God's will, or we found ourselves reaching out to someone in love and care.

When we recall such moments, our natural response will be gratitude. As we savor the blessing once again, it continues to nourish us and give us life. This experience of gratitude and renewed vitality can be an important indicator that we are living "in sync" with God's desires for our life.

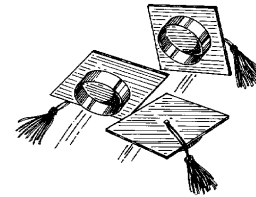
Of equal importance are our experiences of our being "out of sorts" - those moments when we feel drained and anxious, disconnected from people, when we act in ways that make us apologize for "not being myself." These moments also are important to notice and hold, and can help us to recognize those activities and conditions that may be out of line with God's desires. An important service to the church or the community, if it continues to drain all your energy and spirit, may not be the service God is asking you to perform. Or perhaps the Holy Spirit is encouraging you to attend to other dimensions of your life, such as family relationships or recreation.

Over time, the practice of daily reflection can help us to become more aware of the presence of God in even the most insignificant experiences of life, and to discern how the Holy Spirit is encourag-

encouraging us to live ways that enable us to give and receive love more freely, to glorify and enjoy God, and to use our energy for the building up of Christ's realm.

We invite you to join us in worship at 9:00 AM Sundays Traditional Service with opportunities of Sunday School and Bible Study and 11:00 AM for our Contemporary Service and 10:00 AM for fellowship and refreshments in Fellowship Hall.

Together we come to learn and experience God's truth and love for our lives - *God Bless You!* Pastor Dave



CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

Congratulations and best wishes to all of our graduates as you begin a new chapter in your life. We're proud of you! May God continue to bless you in your future plans.

MUSIC SUNDAY was OUTSTANDING! OUR SINCERE THANKS!

A BIG THANK YOU to the members of our Vocal and Handbell Choirs and Laurie Matheson and Bette Fankhauser for their dedication and wonderful talents. Our thanks also to Laurie for serving as our gifted organist.

A BIG THANK YOU to the members of our First Praise Band and tech team and to Rick Boldizar for their great talents and dedication. Be sure to tell all our gifted musicians..."well done!"

Also a BIG Thank You to all our ministry members such as Worship and Music, whose efforts throughout the year helps make First Church a great place to worship.

A BIG THANK YOU

We THANK all our LOGOS and Sunday School teachers, Playmates Preschool staff, ministry members and helpers for helping our students learn more about their faith and a job- WELL DONE! We also want say to our families, parents, grandparents and students - THANK YOU for making faith a priority in your life and life of your children and youth.

Continued on Page 5



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
Reed Cordts
3. Stacey Carter
5. Claire Nicholson
6. Mark Flenner
8. June Lindsten
Madeline Mitchell
9. Sydney Riewski
10. Dee Wenneker
14. Emily Pomrening
Alexandra Baltimore
Ron Horn
15. Bernice Woodhall
Wallace Lorey
Mary Lou Garfield
17. Alex Fisher
18. Marla Russell
Hayden Palmer
19. Harold Harmison
21. Jamie Hill
22. Penny Kotal
Annell Gibson
23. Ann Stringer
Shawn Painter
Jennifer Ruff
24. William Hickman
Anthony Hamilton
25. Allen Gerhold
David Kelley
26. Sue Bunselmeyer
27. Paula Carmichael
28. Hannah Dicken
30. Bonnie Ruecker
Nathan Hamilton

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. William & Alice Huebner
2. Frank & Shelly Smith
3. Richard & Ingrid Cox
4. Bob & Lindy Blackwell
5. Bill & Megan Reininger
7. Tom & Bette Lynn Fankhauser
Ryan & Liz Luedtke
8. Paul & Ruth DeBruine
Terry & Heather Stoa
10. David & Brandi Brown
Michael & Cynthia Gann
Anthony & Holly Hamilton
11. Todd & Christine Clark
12. Ronald & Sherry Palmer
Peter & Lisa Jaberg
Michelle & Courtney Settles
14. Bruce & Debbie Whitney
15. James & Christen Clifton
16. Nathan & Natalie Harmison
17. Tom & Penny Kotal
18. Roger & Claudia Metzger
19. Roger & Janice Kahila
20. Neal & Kay Janvrin
Ron & Bonnie Ruecker
Kyle & Emily Pomrening
21. Denny & Tammy Stanton
22. Russell & Janet Tiede
25. Tommy & Jill Robertson
26. Clarence & Carolyn Elliott

JUNE

FIRST SERVICE VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

JUNE 3

LITURGIST: Paul DeBruine
FLOWERS: Tom & Bette Lynn Fankhauser
COFFEE: Ron & Bonnie Ruecker
USHERS/GREETER: Paul & Ruth DeBruine, Joe & Carol Robertson

JUNE 10

LITURGIST: Bonnie Ruecker
FLOWERS: Ron & Sherry Palmer
COFFEE: Dave & Pat Mahr
USHERS/GREETER: Everett & Shirley Kuhn, Mark & Susan Daley

JUNE 17

LITURGIST: Marsha Mower
FLOWERS: Skip & Marsha Mower
COFFEE: Ron & Sherry Palmer
USHERS/GREETER: Pat & Margie Malone, Bob Bunselmeyer, Chuck Zweck

JUNE 24

LITURGIST: Chuck Zweck
FLOWERS: Mable McCane
COFFEE: Open
USHERS/GREETER: Todd, Tucker & Christina Clark, Bob Bunselmeyer

SECOND SERVICE VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

JUNE 3

USHER/GREETER: Sandy Harmison
REFRESHMENTS: Sandy Harmison

JUNE 10

USHER/GREETER: Mike Koyak
REFRESHMENTS: Mike Koyak

JUNE 17

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

JUNE 24

USHER/GREETER: Betty Wheatley
REFRESHMENTS: Betty Wheatley



IMPORTANT

Children's Ministry would like to give Mindy Bunselmeyer some summer time off. Please contact Mindy, Chair of Children's Ministry to volunteer one Sunday or two this summer. Call her at 217-412-5646

IMPORTANT

Our thanks to all our all of you, church family, for making faith education a vital priority and for remembering our Christian Education programs in your prayers and through your caring support of time, talents and money.

ILLINOIS CONFERENCE ANNUAL MEETING

You have an opportunity to learn more about our UCC story by attending part or all of our Illinois Conference Annual Meeting -- Celebration.

When: June 8-9, Friday and Saturday

Where: Doubletree Hotel Chicago

1909 Spring Rd. Oakbrook, IL 60523

More info at www.ilucc.org or 708-344-4470

IS CHURCH CAMP ON YOUR SUMMER CALENDAR?

There is still time to register for a great time at church camp event. Registration information is available.

More info at www.ilucc.org or 708-344-4470



THANK YOU

Dear Friends,

We want to thank you for the prayers, kind words, and many, many cards we received from you. Thank you, also, for allowing Dave to have the time off to travel to Wichita to be with us. Denice's massive brain hemorrhage and death just a couple days later were very sudden. It was good for all of us to be together as family to laugh, cry, pray, tell stories, and lift each other up. Thank you for wrapping all of us in your prayers once again. Thank you, too, for watching over Christen and Aaron with your prayers and concerns while we were in Wichita. We thank God for each of you.

In Christ,

Pastor Dave and Bobbie, Christen and Aaron Taylor



Youth Activities

Youth Happenings for June and July

Join us on Thursday, June 21st for an evening of fun and entertainment by the Decatur Park Singers and the Decatur Young Park Singers.

Bring your lawn chairs, family and friends and enjoy the music of many talented young singers and musicians.

The youth will be selling popcorn, snow cones and plenty to drink as a fund raiser for mission work.

Save the date of Saturday, July 21st for the second annual Bag, Bocce and Bar-B-Que.

More on this in the weeks to come.

THANK YOU

Pastor Dave and First Church congregation

I can't thank you enough for all your prayers and support. The card, the visits and the prayer shawl were all acts of kindness one can only come to appreciate during such a personal time of need.

I am happy to report I am home and recovering. I have a few more weeks of antibiotics and doctor visits; but doctors expect a full recovery!

Thanks again,

Melissa Flies

VBS 2011

July 22-26

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.)

Plans are moving right along for VBS 2012 at First Church. We hope you have SAVED THE DATES and have been thinking and praying about how you can be involved in this year's program. This is a church-wide endeavor and we always have room for anyone who would like to help out!

Sky – Everything Is Possible With God! is our theme. We will meet Pat, Orville, Scout, Apollo and Rockette as they help us with our daily Bible Point, Story and Verse. The dates are Sunday, July 22 – Thursday, July 26 from 6:00-8:30, with the preschool children having the option of leaving at 8:05. Dinner will be available for the volunteers at 5:15 (\$3 per person, per evening). Our biggest need is an ADULT leader and assistants for Skydive Diner (snacks). We need a few more adult Crew Leaders to shuttle the children through the events each evening; assistants for All-Star Games and Preschool Treehouse; help with 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 contact us as soon as possible and let us know which area God is calling you to.

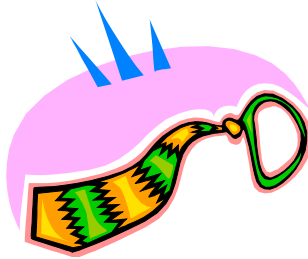
Monetary donations are always a blessing to help defray costs. We are planning for 70 children this year, with a cost of approximately \$25.00 per week (\$5 per day), per child. We want to provide for any and all children who wish to participate. We encourage you to sponsor a child (or children) for this year's program. Checks should be made payable to First Congregational Church, with a memo for VBS 2012.

Included in the program again is a mission project. This year, we will collect monetary donations to send to World Vision for the purchase of mosquito nets for children in Mali, Africa. All VBS participants and our congregation are invited to make monetary donations to this mission project. During the family craft time on Thursday evening, Friendship Cards will be created to send with our donations. Outreach Ministry has graciously covered the costs of the card supplies.

And of course, we always need your prayers. For more information, contact VBS Co-Directors Marsha Mower and Maureen Ruski. THANKS!

UGLY TIE CONTEST

Hey Guys, Come and join us for an Ugly Tie contest!!!. Do you remember all those ties you received as gifts at Christmas and for your Birthday??? Well, that tie could earn you a pie of your choice just for wearing it to church on Father's Day, June 17. All men of the church are invited to join in the competition. Two winners from each service will be awarded the prize which will be made especially for them. Come to church and join in on the fun.



RUMMAGE SALE

Women's Fellowship will be holding their annual rummage sale on June 15-16. As you are spring cleaning, please remember to save items for the sale. We do not have space yet to accept these donations but will let you know when you can bring them. We ask that you remember the following: clean, usable clothing; no exercise equipment; no encyclopedias; merchandise in good working order; and, if the item might be unidentifiable, please put a note on it so we are able to tell customers what it is. Thanks for helping us have a profitable sale.

APRIL 2012 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>April, 12</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$15,739.17	\$62,956.68
Budget Expense	\$17,140.48	\$68,561.92
Income	\$16,729.64	\$70,102.83
Expenses	\$11,456.03	\$59,748.66



Our 2012 **Foods Resource Bank growing project** is underway. Again this year we have had 5 acres of farmland donated for our project and our corn crop has been planted. Now it is up to us to help contribute to the crop expenses. Our cost to plant one acre of corn is:

Seed corn	\$127.00
Fertilizer	193.00
Fungicide	25.00
Herbicide	30.00
Diesel fuel	22.50
Crop hail insurance	10.00

If you would like to be a part of this project, donation envelopes are available in the pews.

This is the 7th year for First Congregational's involvement with FRB. In the past

- we have helped Kenyan farmers grow their own improved seed stock,
- we have helped dairy farmers in Bosnia start their own milk cooperative,
- we have helped the people of the rivers of Nicaragua diversify their crops with regard to caring for the environment,
- we have helped Haitian immigrants in the Dominican Republic eat better, farm better and read better,
- and the last 2 years we have helped improve the life of the people of North Korea.

Every year our profits have increased due to your generous support of this project and some lucky marketing. Over the last six years we have contributed over \$45,000 to these sustainable food programs, teaching people in the poorest areas of the world to feed themselves. We are changing lives together one village at a time.

CARDMAKING DAY

Pastoral Care will be having a Cardmaking Day on Saturday, June 23, from 9 am to 3 pm in Fellowship Hall. Any interested persons are welcome to come to help. Coffee and snacks will be provided. If you have any questions, please contact Paula Cordts or Jodi Baldwin.

Thanks!
Jodi

God's Busy Hands

A report on the progress of the blanket programs you so generously support:

In mid February I informed you of the request for 100 blankets for the Springfield area military deployment. These needed to be turned in by the end of May. We have surrendered 49 blankets to that Project Linus program and have 41 more ready to go.

We are continuing to make blankets for this program as well as concurrently making and providing blankets for the Regions Pediatric Trauma Center in Minneapolis. We also continue to provide blankets for Mano a Mano to be used in their Bolivia work. About a year ago Dan Narr, Executive Director U.S. Mano a Mano International Partners, presented a program in fellowship hall explaining the Mano a Mano program in Bolivia.

We calculate we have created about 2,025 blankets since our inception in 2008!

This group also continues to knit prayer shawls, caps and mittens. We have given a total of 60 Prayer Shawls or Lap Robes. We have 12 Prayer Shawls ready to go as needed. Carolyn Strong knitted and donated 50 pair of mittens in various sizes. Betty Wheatley knitted 45 – 50 caps also scarves (as a guess 25). Over the years purchased mittens, caps and scarves of an unknown number were donated.

Thank You, Clarence Elliott

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

I will be taking the position of public relations officer for the church. Therefore, please let me know of any activities of the church that should be put into the papers, on the radio or on the internet. I will start sending information out as soon as I start receiving it or hear about activities. This is a good chance to advertise the church and all we are doing.

Bill Huebner

DOVE

The DOVE Annual Meeting was held at the First Presbyterian Church April 30, 2012. After dinner the new executive Director, Jim Walters, was introduced. He has an engaging personality and will give new life and direction to the organization. He is looking forward to speaking at the many churches that support DOVE and we hope that he will be a guest at our church this summer.

I am always impressed by the people who staff the DOVE programs. The directors are tireless workers who provide valuable services to our fellow citizens who have unmet needs and they make life more bearable and our community more civil. The directors have not had a raise in five years but continue to work for the good of the community.

A few facts about DOVE and their programs:

The HOMEWARD BOUND program has 39 units available for emergency housing and often there is a greater need.

The CHILDREN'S CLOTHING ROOM often serves over 200 children a month. There is gently used clothing available at no cost. However, the greatest need is for underwear in any size and they gladly accept donations.

The DOMESTIC VIOLENCE program provides assistance and support to clients in five counties: Macon, Moultrie, Piatt, Shelby and DeWitt. These are just a few of the programs that DOVE supports with your help. As you can see, the need is great and your help is always appreciated. If you are interested in volunteering for DOVE you may call their office, 428-6616 or if you want more information please speak with Ruth De Bruine.

Adult Program News

Thanks!

Sixty ladies enjoyed our Ladies Night Out on May 4. We had a delicious meal, followed by an enjoyable lesson on flower arranging given by Carolyn Wallen. Everyone took home a beautiful arrangement of her own creation.

We would like to thank chefs Tom Cordts and Mike Koyak and their kitchen crew, Paul Debrune, Ev Kuhn, Chuck Zweck, Charlie Tribout, Bob Bunselmeyer, Chris Leman, and Todd and Tucker Clark.

Guys' Night Out...Whatsit?

The ladies aren't the only ones to have a night of their own.

Gentlemen, mark your calendars for July 7. At 6:00, we will have dinner, followed by a presentation from our guest, Stan SeEVERS on Whatsits. If you want to know what a whatsit is, you'll have to join us to find out.

Tickets will go on sale for \$10 starting Father's Day, June 17th. Look for us in Fellowship Hall between services. Tickets will also be available in the office throughout the week.



READING
IS
DELICIOUS

Summer Reading Program
open to all kids pre-school through
5th grade

Come discover the fun of reading this summer, with a storyteller for the younger kids, and independent reading time for the older kids with a variety of books to choose from.

- A tasty craft that you can eat.
- Set reading goals and earn some prizes as you accomplish them.
- For more information call us or check our website

When: Mondays 10-11 a.m.
June 4, 11, 18 & 25th
July 2, 9, 16 & 23rd

Where: First Congregational
United Church of Christ
3465 N. MacArthur Road
Telephone: 877-2216



Our web-site firstchurchdeatur.com



CHURCH TELEPHONE NUMBER

In the latest AT&T telephone directory, First Church is not listed under churches in the yellow pages, it is listed under "Clergy". It will be corrected in next years directory. It is listed in the Business White pages.

In the Hometown Phone Book, it is listed in the Business White pages, but not in the yellow pages.

Therefore, it is always best to look in the Business White pages for the telephone number of the church.

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH

On Pentecost Sunday we will be receiving the Strengthen the Church special mission offering of the United Church of Christ. This offering builds the UCC's future. It funds new congregations and renews existing ones. It supports programs for youth and young adults and nurtures current and future leaders. And it aids the God is Still Speaking Ministry to spread our message of inclusivity. It is directed to local Conferences, Local Church Ministries and the Stillspeaking Ministry, Strengthen the Church gifts help to create vibrant church communities of extravagant welcome. Envelopes can be found in the pews or you can send in your check and put "Strengthen Our Church" in the note section.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE RECOGNITION



On Sunday, May 13, the following high school graduates were recognized; Megan Hartman, Alyssa Baker, Lauren Druessel, Zack Wenecke and Katie Malone.

First Ringers Need Help

The First Ringers handbell group has lost most of its young participants. You know, the ones with the strong arms and legs? We're thankful we've had very good volunteer help taking the bells back down to storage after our performances in the sanctuary. If we could have volunteers helping to set bells up for our rehearsals, and especially the rehearsal in the sanctuary the Thursday before a performance, we may be able to present handbell music again this coming fall season. Thank you very much!

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	7 2:30 Bible Study	8 Wedding Rehearsal	9 Ryder/Gilman Wedding
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	14 2:30 Bible Study	15 8-4:00 Rummage Sale	16 8-11:00 Rummage Sale
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	21 2:30 Bible Study Decatur Park Singers	22	23 9-3:00 Card Making
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	28 2:30 Bible Study	29	30

