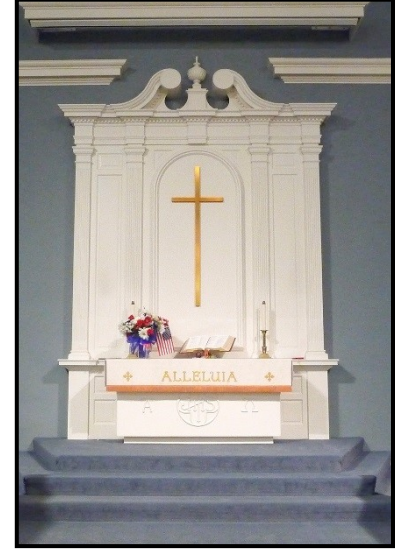


Congregational Comments



Vol. 22 No. 11: November 2017

Important Contacts in the Church

Pastor: Rev. Ryan Travis, 217-413-4272

Email: pastorryan@firstchurchdecat.org

Prayer Chain: Bette Fankhauser, 877-6723

Email: blfankhauser@comcast.com

Playmates Preschool: Interim Director: Alfreda Tribout

Newsletter Editor: Bill Huebner, 876-1446, cell 855-7677

Email: wshuenber.editor@prodigy.net

Church Contact Information:

3465 N. MacArthur Rd.

Decatur, IL 62526

Telephone: 877-2216

Email: firstchurchdecat@sbcglobal.net

Website: www.firstchurchdecat.org

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:

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A Note from Pastor Ryan



What are you willing to fight for? What are you willing to stand up for? To stand up and scream at the top of your lungs until someone listens? What, for you, is “worth the risk?” In our day and age, sometimes it seems as though there is little worth fighting for, because at this point we’re so certain that we won’t be heard, it feels as though it’s not really worth the time, energy, and the scratchy throats. Honestly? I’m not sure that many people these days feel like there’s anything worthy of that much effort. There is so much going on that everything has leveled out in terms of importance. When you have so much to balance, how on earth do you prioritize? You can’t, and so everything just hovers around mid-level importance, and there’s very little worth going to bat for. It’s simply the reality we live in...

Five hundred years ago...that wasn’t the case. In 1517, Martin Luther looked at the world he lived in, the Church he worshipped in, and he said that it was time to stand up, shout, fight and argue until he was blue in the face, hoarse in the throat, and exhausted down to the bone. He looked around at The Church he had grown up in, served in, dedicated his life to; and he saw it deteriorating into a means to make money at the expense of the poor and the lost. He saw The Church building itself up and erecting material kingdoms on earth, with very little worry about the kingdom of God, on earth or in heaven. He heard about people being in the “soul saving” business, who truly didn’t care one bit about the souls in their care. Now, Martin Luther wasn’t exactly a “somebody,” someone with influence and hordes of people behind him. He was one man, one lone voice, but he didn’t let that stop him.

Luther did everything he could to change the world he was living in. He wrote the 95 theses, explicitly stating the corruptions he saw in the church, and then he put them on doors of the Wittenberg Church to speak for themselves. He spent hours locked away in a castle, hiding from the government, and instead of wallowing in self-pity, he used that time to translate the Bible into German. This way, the average person could have access to the scriptures, could read them, and interpret them for themselves. He encouraged fellow monks and clergy who were following him to marry, and then went out and got married himself. He was brought before The Church government and was told that unless he recanted every single thing he had ever written he would be excommunicated, threatened with arrest and possibly death. He instead chose to stand up boldly and proudly and declare, “Here I stand, I can do no other.” He wouldn’t back down. He was willing to turn his back on everything he had ever known, risk everything he had, all because he had found something worth fighting for: his faith that God’s saving love and grace was all that mattered, his belief that good works didn’t earn you a spot in heaven – only Christ’s life-giving death on the cross could do that.

As Protestants, this is our heritage. It is a heritage of risky faith, faith that clings to the gospel and the hope that in Christ alone we have eternal life. It is a heritage of speaking up when we see people being trodden underfoot and taken advantage of. It is a heritage of trusting that some things are worth fighting for. It is a heritage of wanting any and all who desire to participate in worship to do so. It is a heritage of understanding, realizing and embracing the fact that the church should always be reforming. It is a heritage of knowing it’s ok to question what is going on in the world, rather than just following blindly because that’s what has always been done. It is a heritage of putting our faith in God alone, and then going out and serving our neighbor to the best of our ability. Martin Luther found something worth fighting for and 500 years later, we are still here, still reforming, still striving to be better, to be more faithful, to be more dedicated servants. Happy Reformation month to you all. May the spirit of Martin Luther, his fire and his passion live on in you, the inheritors of his wonderful, difficult, risky faith.

EVENTS



FIRST CHURCH FOODS RESOURCE BANK GROWING PROJECT

Routed in Community Grounded in Faith

Fall harvest is underway. The growing project has not been harvested as the guys are concentrating on combining soybeans. The whole process has been slow this year due to the recent frequent rains. However, the yields appear to be better than anticipated and that will help balance out the low prices. If anyone wants to ride during any of the harvest this fall, the combine buddy seat is available. Just give Bob a call at 412-33176 to make arrangements and he will direct you to the field where he is working.

If you would like to make a donation to help pay the cost of planting this crop, donation envelopes can be found in the pews and may be placed in the offering basket or delivered to the church office. Please make your check payable to First Congregational UCC, and indicate that it is for our FRB growing project.

Our Foods Resource Bank growing project will teach people in some of the poorest parts of the world to feed themselves and their families and give them the dignity and pride of doing so. Thank you for your help with this mission project.

Thanksgiving Baskets

Thanksgiving Baskets

The Youth Group is again assembling and distributing Thanksgiving baskets. During November, all canned good donations to the bins at the church entrances will be used for these baskets. Donations of the following items will be especially helpful:

Green beans	Corn	Brown gravy	Stuffing
Salad dressings	Peanut butter	Jelly	Oatmeal
Spaghetti	Spaghetti sauce		

Monetary donations are also welcome and will be used for perishables. The Youth will gather to assemble and distribute the baskets after church on November 19th. Please remember this outreach while you are shopping and help us spread cheer this holiday season.

Important - Please Read

NO CHURCH PROPERTY MAY LEAVE THE CHURCH BUILDING FOR PRIVATE USE

In September, 2011, the Church Council passed the following motion:

“Church property and equipment may leave the church building for approved church functions or the functions of affiliated organizations, but it must be checked out. Removal of any item valued over \$100 must be approved by Church Council. No church property may leave the church for private use or for the use of non-affiliated organizations. “

There is a check out list in the kitchen for removal of church property or equipment for church functions.



REMINDER ON CHURCH BUILDING USAGE

BUILDING USE POLICY AND PROCEDURES Non-Wedding

First Congregational United Church of Christ is happy to provide a place for meetings of non-profit, community and private organizations. In turn, these organizations have responsibilities to the Church for the privileges of using our facilities. Political events, profit making ventures or events not consistent with the mission of First Congregational Church will not be permitted.

Any person/group using the church building must notify the office and complete the Building Use Application / Agreement.

For any non church related activity, a \$50 rental fee will be required in advance from all groups using FCC's building. \$25 will be refunded if the Church facilities and/or equipment are left in acceptable condition. For groups exempt from fees, gifts may be made to the Church to off-set costs assumed by the Church.

Thanksgiving Dinner



Join our Church Family for Thanksgiving Dinner
12 p.m. on Sunday, November 12th
Fellowship Hall

The delicious meal provided:

Turkey

Dressing

Mashed Potatoes and Gravy

Drinks

Those with the last names beginning with the following, please bring:

A – I: Dessert

J – R: Vegetable

S – Z: Salad

Kindly RSVP so we know how much food to purchase and prepare. Please reply to Shirley Zimmerman at 875-7302 or sdzcomm27@comcast.net, or you may call Peggy in the church office at 877-2216.

Thanksgiving Sunday



LOGOS women serving lunch for our Thanksgiving Sunday

Decatur Area Church Women United

Decatur Area Church Women United will hold their World Community Day Celebration on Friday, Nov. 3rd at 1:00 PM at the Trinity CME Church, 444 So. Webster St. Theme is "Kindling New Fires for PEACE".

Churches participating in the program include Grace United Methodist, Church of the Annunciation, St. Peters AME, First Congregational UCC, Prairie Avenue Christian and Westminster Presbyterian.

All are welcome to attend. For further information contact Darla Weltmer, 877-7008

Thank You

We as a congregation are so blessed to have so many individuals who are willing to share their talents with us. A sincere thank you to all those who volunteered for the summer music program. Their participation was an added blessing to our Sunday service and was appreciated by all. Those participating included:

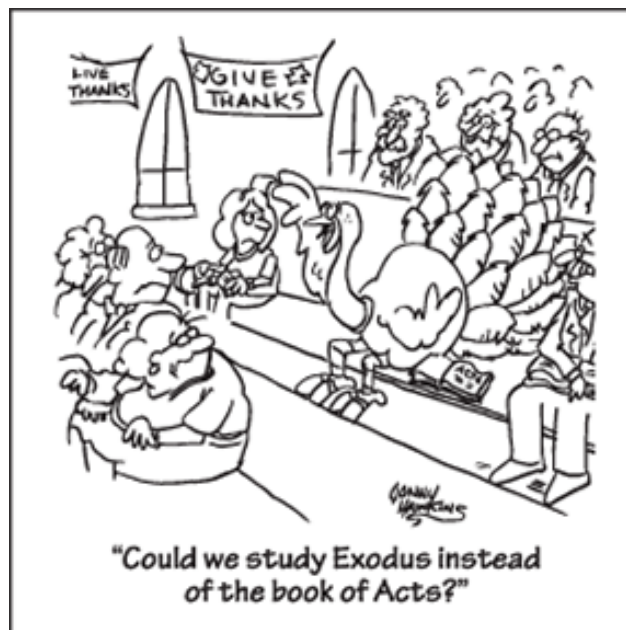
Laurie Matheson
Trevor May
Marsha Mower
Bill Brooks
Dave Mahr

Gavin Butts
Anna and Emma DeBruine
Gehrig Bunselmeyer
Logan Moster
Devon and Malone Moretti

Finance Notes

SEPTEMBER 2017 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>Sept 17</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$18,288.92	\$164,600.28
Budget Expense	\$17,714.72	\$159,432.48
Income	\$19,154.58	\$146,106.40
Expenses	\$17,642.60	\$149,316.42



From Your Church President

From Your Church President.....

Now that the 4th quarter of 2017 at First Church is underway, we have many things to be thankful for and celebrate. God has been very good to us this year and bestowed upon us many blessings!

I'd like to take this opportunity to remind you of the goals the Administration and Council of Ministry Teams set for 2017 and give you an update.

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.

The plan was to transition into the new model in the 1st quarter, begin the rewrite in the 2nd quarter and have the proposal ready for the congregation to review and approve in October. As I write this, I am anticipating we will be approving the new Constitution and By-Laws on October 22nd (which also replace the Organizational Manual), bringing all this documentation in line with our new structure.

Goal No. 2 - Develop new Outreach ministries to Decatur and the surrounding area. *Our Outreach Ministry Team met many times to get a thorough understanding of our recent outreach projects and/or donations. They visited all the local agencies we support and came up with a plan for the future months/year. This plan includes a reallocation of monies, a couple of new recipients, a list of "hands-on" volunteer opportunities for members to consider and plans for a mission fundraiser in 2018.*

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. *Pastor Ryan is developing a small-group Bible Study, "Who is Jesus – A Six Week Journey of Faith" which will begin on Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2018.*

My heartfelt thanks to all those who have been involved in the goal work this year. Our Officers and Ministry Team Co-Leaders have been working very hard on their areas of responsibility and many of you have stepped up to volunteer for some aspect of our church work. THANK YOU to everyone for working together to further God's work inside and outside our church building. May we always "listen" with an open ear for the plans God has for us, work together to discern what God is calling us to do and be, and trust Him to lead us where He would have us go.

We celebrate the monetary gifts that provided for new computers in the offices and balcony. We have been blessed by the time and talents of some of our members in researching and coming up with a realistic proposal for the much-needed updates to our projection and sound systems. The funding for this project is mostly in place, with members being given the opportunity to contribute to the \$2900 balance.

We celebrate the dedicated group of members who worked tirelessly to come up with a realistic and manageable proposal for an elevator. Information is being shared at the October 22nd congregational meeting and we anticipate the Annual Meeting on December 3rd will include a vote to approve the elevator project.

We celebrate our wonderful staff - Pastor Ryan Travis, Peggy Mennel, Laurie Matheson, Bette Fankhauser, Rick Boldizar, Jillian Daley, Christina Huckile and our Preschool director and teachers. We are truly blessed by their ministry with us!

We celebrate another successful stewardship campaign and the generous hearts of all who have committed their time, talents and resources to the work and mission of First Church in the coming year.

We celebrate you - our members, friends and attendees who support our ministry and mission in so many ways.

And we celebrate our awesome God, who continues to walk with us through everything we do, providing us with new opportunities on a daily basis.

May God richly bless each and every one of you!

Marsha Mower, Church President

LOGOS

LOGOS THEMES

NOVEMBER

- 1 – Western Hoedown
- 8 – Celebrate Veterans
- 14 – Butter Braid pick-up 4:45
- 15 – Give Thanks
- 22 – NO LOGOS
- 29 – Setting Sail

NOVEMBER 2017						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

DECEMBER 2017

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

DECEMBER

- 6 – A LOGOS Christmas
- 13 – NO LOGOS
- 17 – Christmas Pageant 9:00
- 20 – NO LOGOS
- 27 – NO LOGOS

JANUARY

- 3 – NO LOGOS
- 10 – Fiesta!
- 17 – Strikes and Spares
- 24 – Renaissance Night
- 31 – Rise and Shine

JANUARY 2018						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

FEBRUARY 2018

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

FEBRUARY

- 7 – NO LOGOS
- 14 – Ash Wednesday
- 21 – thgiN sdrawkcaB
- 28 – Taking Flight

2017-2018

Butter Braid/Show Me Dough Fundraiser

October 4 – November 8

(delivery 11/14 – pick-up 4:45-5:15pm)

LOGOS meets 4:15 – 6:45pm, unless otherwise noted.

Happenings

FFDO

Friday, November 3

6:00 pm

Taproot



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



Thanksgiving Dinner

Sunday, November 12

12 Pm

Fellowship Hall



Admin Meeting

Monday, November 13

5:30 pm

Council of Ministry Teams

Monday, November 20

5:30 pm

November 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.

- 2. Paula Cordts
- 4. Miranda Miller
- 5. Tyler Wernecke
- 9. Linda Connelly
- 10. Peggy Ruff
- 12. Maureen Ruski
Brian Traugher
- 13. Peggy Druessel
- 14. David Mahr
- 20. Debbie Moster
- 22. David Carpenter
Jake Sawyer
Robby Moore
- 26. Jodi Baldwin
- 27. Laurel Lorey
- 28. Ramona Borders
Chase Leman
William Mitchell
- 30. Valerie Janvrin

And may the many blessings that have come from God above fill your hearths with all the joy of His enduring love. Happy Anniversary.

- 8. Ned & Sandy Cummings
Craig & Pam Mueller
- 24. Joe & Carol Robertson
- 25. Mark & Pat Jaberg
- 30. Gary & Judy Sawyer

Remember to Pray for and Visit Members Who are in Assisted Living and Nursing Homes

Primrose Retirement Community

Claude Young—Room 228
Marian Simpson—Room 130

Randell Residence

Carolyn Jones—Room 216

Vonderlieth Living Center, Mt. Pulaski, IL

Alice Roach

Hickory Point Christian Village

Al Wilson—Room 202
Patricia Weiss—Room 325

Evergreen Place

Mary Lou Phipps—Room 208

Fair Haven Christian Home

Lois Shelton—Room 113

Decatur Rehab Health Care

Beverly Capshaw -Room 22

Lincolnshire Place

Marie Bauer—Room 213



First Church Sunday Morning

	Date	9:00 AM Service	11:00 AM Service
 LITURGISTS	November 5	Marsha Mower	
	November 12	Dee Wenneker	
	November 19	Melinda Redman	
	November 26	Bill Huebner	
 Altar Flowers	November 5	Sharon Burbes	
	November 12	Helen Johnson	
	November 19	Martha Crookshank	
	November 26	Kathy Richardson	
 Fellowship hour	November 5	Jim & Jodi Baldwin	Ruby Voyles/Shirley Zimmerman
	November 12	Kristin Hargrove	Wes Pietsch
	November 19	Chuck Zweck	Joe Moretti/Maureen Ruski
	November 26	Sheila Mannweiler	Betty Wheatley
 USHERS	November 5	Dave Carpenter, Darla Weltmer, Mike & Toni Longstreet	Ruby Voyles/Shirley Zimmerman
	November 12	Marilee Gordon, Robert & Penny Butts, Sheila Mannweiler	Wes Pietsch
	November 19	Tom & Paula Cordts, Don & Dee Wenneker	Joe Moretti/Maureen Ruski
	November 26	Paul & Ruth DeBruine, Dave & Marlene Gant	Betty Wheatley

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

November Calendar

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 4:15—6:45 LOGOS 7:00 Choir Practice	2 10:30 Sun- rise Clergy Meeting 2:15 Girl Scouts 5:45 1st Ringers	3 6:00 MCYP	4 8:00 AA
5 9:00 Tradi- tional 10:00 Fellow- ship Hour 11:00 Con- temporary	6	7 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 7:00 Choir Practice 8:00 AA	8 4:15—6:45 LOGOS 5:15 Veterans Dinner	9 2:15 Girl Scouts 5:45 1st Ringers	10 6:00 MCYP	11 8:00 AA
12 12:00 Thanksgiv- ing Dinner FH	13 5:30 Admin 7:00 Proper- ty Meeting	14 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	15 4:15—6:45 LOGOS 7:00 Choir Practice	16 2:15 Girl Scouts 5:45 1st Ringers	17 6:00 MCYP	18 8:00 AA
19 9:00 Tradi- tional 10:00 Fellow- ship Hour 11:00 Con- temporary	20 5:30 Council of Ministry Teams	21 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 7:00 Choir Practice 8:00 AA	22	23  Thanksgiving	24 6:00 MCYP	25 8:00 AA
26 9:00 Tradi- tional 10:00 Fellow- ship Hour 11:00 Con- temporary	27	28 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA	29 4:15—6:45 LOGOS 7:00 Choir Practice	30 2:15 Girl Scouts 5:45 1st Ringers		



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

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 - New church Constitution and By-Laws presented to congregation on October 22, 2017
- Goal 2 – Outreach Ministry Team Co-Leaders, Joe Moretti and Gary Baker, have developed a new plan for Outreach..
- 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. A Six Week Journey of Faith” will take place during lent, beginning February 14