

Congregational Comments

Vol. 21 No 10: October 2016

Pastor: Rev. Jan Johnson: 309-267-3260

Email: RevJanUCC@sbcglobal.net

Prayer Chain: Marsha Mower: 412-8797

Email: m.mower@sbcglobal.net

Playmates Preschool:

Interim Director: Alfreda Turnout

Newsletter Editor: Bill Huebner

Telephone: 876-1446 Cell: 855-7677

Email: wshuebner.editor@prodigy.net

Church Contact Information:

3465 N. MacArthur Rd.

Decatur, IL 62526

Telephone: 877-2216

Email: firstchurchdecatur@sbcglobal.net

Website: www.firstchurchdecatur.com

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 Jan Johnson

FROM THE PASTOR

Psalm 119: 105 Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path!

Confirmation Class has begun! Please take the time to meet and get to know our Confirmands: Connor and Gavin Butts and Mitchell Daley. October 16 is Children's Sabbath and the class will be writing parts of that service as well as leading worship. Make sure to join us for worship that day! Each month we will engage in a Jesus-has-left-the-building experience: a trip to Rock Springs Park to build community, Eastern-Western Association Meeting, collecting and delivering food to a food pantry or soup kitchen. Each week we will 'stay connected' with email questions that will need to be responded to from the Student's Journal 'Affirming Faith'. Each student will select a Biblical character to research and discover a Bible character that is most like him! You may even find a little Confirmation Article in the newsletter each month as well!

Mentors will be selected and are welcome to join us for a variety of activities and are encouraged to sit in worship with the students. And in the Spring, Bryan Sirchio will be the keynoter for the Association meetings – the Confirmands will know some of his music because they will use it to memorize books of the Bible (ABC's for the OT and New Testament Rap) and the 10 Commandments (Live the 10) and Beattitudes (The Beattitudes) and Disciples (The Disciples) and some of Bryan's songs will be at the center of our conversations about mission (The Wooden Bell) and evangelism (Bumper-sticker Witness), and the theological themes of acceptance (The Cold Shower Treatment) and stewardship (Put It in the Hands of Jesus).

Here's what you can do for the Confirmands and their parents: provide pizza once a month and pray. Volunteer to be a mentor and pray. Help with transportation to 'off campus' activities and pray.

It'll be a great year, but the experience will be even greater if the members of First Church get behind the kids and support what they are doing! And Pray!

Beverly Hillbillies Bible Study: September 18, 25, October 2 and 9

- Join us in the Lounge between services! It is not necessary to be at the first lessons – come when you can for as long as you can!

There were a couple of other things I wrote about but I can't remember what they are right now. I will have to put them in the bulletin. I hope Chuck can figure out what's what. He seems to think that Edge doesn't really like Yahoo or AT&T or something like that.

I hope this hasn't set you back TOO far!!

Jan

A special article about openness and willingness to accept others who are different from us.....

A Love Story – Chapter 1

After worship we all trudged out to the parking lot and bundled into cars and trucks and headed off to live out our faith in whatever way we could, trying to make sense of God's all inclusive love in our lives.

My family was like most of the families in our church. We attended worship and Sunday School and God's Kids youth group. My dad was a school teacher and served on the church council, he refereed basketball games at the local Jr. High and taught driver's education during the summer. My mom was also a school teacher but she taught Special students. One day I asked her what was Special about her students and she said that they loved to be at school!

While my dad's students were challenging at times, my mom's students were challenged. Some of them couldn't walk, some of them couldn't talk, some of them were very smart but had problems with, uhhhhh, bodily functions. Mom said she was always touched by how they related to her and to one another. They help one another to do the jobs they are given. I had a hard time understanding it when mom said one of her student's worked all year just to be able to sit up. And one student actually cried when her 'sitting' student got the job done. This made me think. "Why does God make kids like this if they can't do anything except sit up?" So I asked Him.

When Sunday came, I couldn't wait to get to church! Mom asked me if I felt ok. She felt my forehead to see if I had a temperature. Sometimes she is just weird! I went straight to our pastor's office and found him at that big desk. All of a sudden I was nervous. Maybe I shouldn't have come here. Maybe I should just wait until we shake hands after the service to ask him. But he looked up and saw me. Well, nothing to do but go in now! I gathered my courage around me like a blanket and crept in. Pastor asked me if he could help me. I bit my lower lip and told him I needed to know something. He smiled and said he would answer almost any question I had or he would be happy to find the answer to my question if he didn't know it. Ok! Deep breath! I looked at his face and it was very kind and gentle looking. He probably wouldn't be angry with me. So I said, "If God is so loving and loves everybody, why did He make the kids in my mom's class?" and I told him about the student who worked all year trying to sit up and the one who cried when it happened the first time. I told him about the kids who couldn't walk and the ones who couldn't talk. I told him I thought it was mean of God to make people like that. And I told him, feeling rather ashamed, that I told God that He was mean.

"I see," said our pastor, his eyes still kind and gentle. "Are you going to be at God's Kids this afternoon?"

"Sure!" I said. "God's Kids is always fun!"

"Good! I'll be there too! And I think I'll have some answers for you. Or at least I'll give you some alternative ideas to consider."

I looked at pastor and he said, "God really doesn't make mistakes. It's just that our experiences in life don't always include Divine wisdom. Maybe tonight you will be able to find a little of that Divine wisdom."

"OK, pastor. Can I still ask questions?" I really needed to ask questions.

"I can't imagine you not asking questions! Ask away. But I have a suspicion you won't need to ask much tonight." Boy, sometimes pastor is downright mysterious.

That afternoon at God's Kids....

The youth leader welcomed us all and we all grabbed bags of chips and sodas and sat in a circle on the floor in our youth room. We all love our youth room because we got to decorate it the way we wanted. There's a soft rug on the floor and big pillows for us to sit on. We have a soda machine that we keep filled and recycle the cans. We have some books that we use to have our devotions each week. And we have a piano that we can play on and some of our group, use it to practice their piano lessons. We have a white wall so we can show movies on it and a programmable keyboard so we can listen to music or play it ourselves and a Wii. We love having lock-ins and we get to

take a mission trip every couple of years when we make enough money. We go to places in the cities and also in rural areas and sometimes we just help people right here in our own town.

Today when we sat on the rug and had our devotions, the pastor came and sat with us. He said he was glad to see us all and that he had some friends coming in a little while but first he wanted to talk to us.

He told us about a place not too far away from our town that he knew of called A Caring Place. That's a place where kids live because they have problems walking and talking. I thought I knew what was coming. He was going to tell us about all the gross things – kids with no legs or no arms or who can't talk and have to be in diapers. But he didn't say any of those things. He said that once the kids got here we were to welcome them and do things with them. Then he asked us what we thought we could do together.

One girl asked if they could have snacks. Pastor said some of the visitors could have snacks but others would bring their own. A guy friend of mine asked if they would like to see a movie. Pastor said, "You should ask them if they want to see a movie when they get here. But I think they might like to get to know you all first."

"We could play a 'get to know' you game" I said, "but how can the kids who do not talk, play that?" "Well, those kids have special equipment that will help them. I think you will be really surprised at how much they really can do and also how much like you they are!" Then it was time to greet them.To Be Continued.....

PHOTOS FROM RALLY DAY



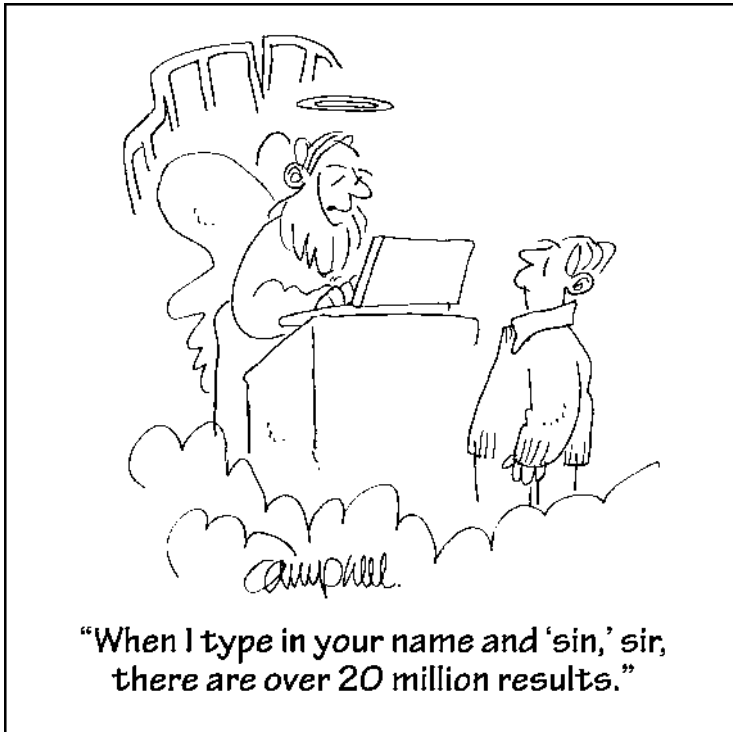
THANK YOU

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for all your cards and prayers on the recent death of Don's dad. A special thank you to Pastor Jan on the large booklet that Logan filled out on how to deal with a death of someone special.

Life is full of changes and we are grateful for the quality time spent with family. Thank you for keeping us in your thoughts and prayers so we can move on with the strength of your faith and family.

Sincerely
Don, Debbie, Erica & Logan Moster



LOGOS

LOGOS' Butter Braids and Show Me Dough Cookies/Pizza Fund-raiser begins on Wednesday, October 5th at LOGOS.

Orders will be taken October 5 - November 9. Payment must be made at the time of ordering.

Make checks payable to: First Congregational UCC-LOGOS

Pickup of items will be on Tuesday, November 15, 4:45 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Butter Braids (\$14.00) are 22 oz. pastries in the flavors of: Apple, Cherry, Cinnamon, Cream Cheese, Raspberry, Strawberry Cream Cheese and Caramel Roll.

Show Me Dough Cookies (\$17.00 / \$16.00) are 40 pre-portioned cookie dough, ready to bake, in flavors of: Candy, Oatmeal Cranberry White Chunk, White Chunk Macadamia Nut / Chocolate Chip, Peanut Butter and Snickerdoodle.

Show Me Dough Pizzas (\$18.00) are 2 delicious full-size 11' pizzas in each box, ready to bake, in flavors of: Four Cheese, Ultimate Pepperoni, Meat Lovers and BBQ Chicken.

These are FANTASTIC for the holidays, so stock up NOW!!!

LOGOS ministry will be in the Fellowship Hall between services and in the narthex after the 11:00 a.m. service on October 16, 23 & 30 and November 6 to take orders **OR** see a LOGOS participant **OR** LOGOS ministry member to place an order. Ministry members are: Sharon Burbes, Jeanette Flenner, Sandy Harmison, Sheila Mannweiler, Marsha Mower, Maureen Ruski and Chuck Zweck.

OCTOBER 2016							OCTOBER	
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15		
16	17	18	19	20	21	22		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29		
30	31							

5 – Batter Up
12 – Little Italy
19 – NO LOGOS
26 – Trunk or Treat
 (parking lot 6:15-6:45)

Playmates News



Allie Russell, Nanette Krueger, Kimberly Putnam

School is back in session and we've begun our 49th year with some changes in our staff. Nanette Krueger is our new four-year old teacher. Allie Russell, who taught the fours last year, will be serving as her assistant through October. In November, Kim Colbert will take over when Allie leaves for the birth of her son. Kimberly Putnam is teaching one of our three-year old classes, as is Alfreda Tribout, who is also serving as Preschool Director.



Last year, we updated all of our classrooms. This summer, our playground was renovated by Property Ministry along with other church volunteers. It looks beautiful! One of the four-year olds said his favorite thing on the first day was playing on the brand new playground. We want to thank all of you for your hard work. We extend a special thank-you to Carol Robertson for painting all of our equipment. Not only is it appreciated by the preschool, you have also enhanced the church property. THANK-YOU!!!

Growing a Church

Growing a church is much like growing a garden. There are things that we can do and must do in order to have a beautiful garden, but much of the process of growing a garden (or a church) is beyond our control. We have to prepare the soil. What is our church known for in the community? Are we known as the church that makes the best ice cream? Or are we known as a welcoming church, or a church that enjoys gathering with each other for worship or fellowship. Do members in our community see joyous Christians living out their faith in love? There was a church in North Kansas City that was known as the Joy Church. Wouldn't that be wonderful to be known as the Joy Church? It is up to us to define our church to the community, to prepare the soil.

We also need to plant seeds, inviting people to worship with us. Sometimes, the place where the seeds fall just isn't conducive for growth. Jesus tells the parable of the sower where some seed was eaten by the birds, some seed fell on rocky soil, and some seed grew but got choked out by weeds. Sometimes, it takes a while for the seeds to grow. One year, I planted carrots and nothing came up. The next spring when I went to till my garden, I had a row of carrots already growing.

There are things that we can do, but there are things over which we have no control. I can't make the seed open up and grab the soil and convert it into energy to grow. With churches, much depends on God's spirit preparing the soil of the heart of those we invite and opening up the seed and helping it grow. All we can do is pray that those we invite will be open to attending.

Once there are signs of life, we can nurture it by keeping the weeds of negativity and careless comments from choking the life out of it. And we can water it with encouragement, caring, support, and prayers.

How does your garden grow?

God Bless,
Pastor Ron

"Taken from The Messenger, the newsletter of St. James and Zion-St. Peter United Church of Christ in Missouri"

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellowship Hour 11:00			
2 Consecration Lay Speaker #3	3 6:30 Leaders Dessert	4 1:00 God's Busy Hands 6:30 Blessing of Pets 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	5 4:15-6:45 7:00 Choir
9 Consecration Sunday	10 3:30 Staff Meeting 5:30 Admin Meeting	11 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	12 4:15-6:45 7:00 Choir
16 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellowship Hour 11:00 Contemporary	17 5:30 Church Council	18 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-anon 8:00 AA	19 4:15-6:45 7:00 Choir
23 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellowship Hour 11:00	24	25 1:00 God's Busy Hands 4:30 AAUW 7:00 Al-anon	26 4:15-6:45 7:00 Choir
30 10:10 Children's Halloween Social 12:00 Music Staff Meeting	31		

Thu		Fri	Sat
			1
LOGOS r	6	7	8
LOGOS r	13	14	15 11:00 Memorial Service Rev. Glen Wernecke
LOGOS r	20 1:15 Book Club	21 6:00 Color at Church	22 7:00 AM AA Founders Day
LOGOS r	27	28	29 Playmates Fellowship Halloween Party
			

FIRST FRIDAY DINNER OUT

FFDO will meet on October 7 at the Beach House at 6:00. We actually will meet there this time and not at an alternate location. Please send email to sharmison2002@yahoo.com if you are planning on attending. Since I will be out of town, reservations made by phone may not make it to the final count.

Sandy Harmison

Color at Church, sponsored by Adult Ministry

Oct. 21, 6-8

Fellowship Hall

Coloring is for everyone! Coloring is for meditation. Coloring relieves stress. Coloring is a great outlet for your artistic, creative talents. Come color with us! Bring a friend, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, spouse, significant other, neighbor, co-worker . . .

You may bring your own project. We will have things for you to color. You may bring your own supplies. We will have crayons, colored pencils, and markers for you to use.

Light snacks will be provided.

(Goal No. 2 - Continue to expand and improve fellowship activities within our church to cause more socialization and comradery between attendees of both services, age groups, and those who lead our ministries.)



Photos by Clarence Elliott

Children's Ministry

1. Thank you to all the Church Ministry members and individuals that stepped up to make our Olympic Rally Day a success!
2. We are looking for an outdoor bench to be donated for our Playground area. There are 2 small benches, but we need one in the shaded area that has a back on it. The condition doesn't matter so much, as we have stain and enamel paints to spruce it up. Please let Joe or Carol Robertson know if you have a bench to donate!
3. Mark your calendars for October 30th! This will be our Children's Halloween Social at 10:00am between services. The children may wear church appropriate costumes that day for Children's Time and they will trick or treat from table to table during Fellowship time downstairs. Children's Ministry will provide candy and treats for each table!



Consecration Sunday Is Coming

Congregations that approach financial stewardship from a biblical perspective do not view the money Christians give to their church merely as a way to pay its bills. Rather, such congregations see financial contributions as a way to help people grow spiritually in their relationship with God by supporting their church's mission and ministry with a percentage of their incomes. Our congregation's stewardship committee has selected the New Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program as a way to teach the biblical and spiritual principles of generous giving in our stewardship education emphasis this year. New Consecration Sunday is based on the biblical philosophy of the need of the giver to give for his or her own spiritual development, rather than on the need of the church to receive. Instead of treating people like members of a social club who should pay dues, we will treat people like followers of Jesus Christ who want to give unselfishly as an act of discipleship. New Consecration Sunday encourages people toward proportionate and systematic giving in response to the question, "What percentage of my income is God calling me to give?"

During morning worship on Consecration Sunday, we are asking our attendees and members to make their financial commitments to our church's missionary, benevolent, and educational ministries in this community and around the world. Every attendee and member who completes an Estimate of Giving Card does so voluntarily by attending morning worship on Consecration Sunday. We urge people to attend who feel strongly opposed to completing a card. The procedure is done in such a way that no one feels personal embarrassment if he or she chooses not to fill out a card. We will do no home solicitation to ask people to complete cards. During morning worship our guest leader will conduct a brief period of instruction and inspiration, climaxed by members making their commitments as a confidential act of worship. We will encourage participation in Consecration Sunday events through the Consecration Sunday team and Church Council members. Since we will make no follow-up visits to ask people to complete their cards, we will make every effort to inform, inspire, and commit everyone to attend Consecration Sunday worship. Thanks in advance for your enthusiastic participation in Consecration Sunday events.

Church President, Marsha Mower

Meals on Wheels

Thank you to these volunteers who helped deliver Meals on Wheels the week of August 29 – September 2:

Sharon Burbes, Dave and Judi Carpenter, Tom and Paula Cordts
Mark and Jeanette Flenner, Bill and Alice Huebner
Ev and Shirley Kuhn, Gerry and Peggy Ruff, Charles Zweck

Meals on Wheels is continually recruiting volunteers to help with the program. First Congregational UCC provides volunteers to deliver meals one week in May and another week in September. Volunteers work in teams of two and are provided excellent delivery instructions. Meals are picked up at Decatur Memorial Hospital between 10:00 and 10:30 AM and the delivery routes take about an hour to complete. If you think you may have time to help with this service, please mark "Meals on Wheels" on the time and talent sheet in this fall's stewardship packet. Sue Bunselmeyer will call on you to arrange a day for you to help with this mission. Thank you.

THANK YOU

Thanks to the volunteers who shared their musical talents with the UCC congregation throughout the summer months. We are blessed to have such talented individuals. Thanks to: Laurie Matheson, Bill Brooks, Bette Lynn and Alexis Fankhauser, Marsha Mower, Dave Mahr, Chris Leman and his family, Devon and Malone Moretti

Laurie Matheson

AUGUST 2016 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>AUG 16</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$18,431.00	\$147,448.00
Budget Expense	\$17,971.56	\$143,772.48
Income	\$14,055.50	\$144,041.21
Expenses	\$19,906.26	\$135,432.13

First Church Book Club

First Church's book club meets on the third Thursday of each month, except December, at 1:15 p.m. in the lounge. We welcome new members, curious persons, once in awhile participants, and anyone else who likes to read and would enjoy discussing books. We do not ask that you sign a lifetime contract, folks, just that you come when you can and that you keep an open mind about books. Not a difficult task, is it? Our books for the rest of the year have been chosen and are as follows:

October 20 -- Mermaids in the Basement by Michael Lee West

November 17 -- The Pursuit of Mary Bennet by Pamela Mingle

At the October meeting, we will choose books for 2017, so please consider coming and bringing along a few suggestions, whether they be books you have read or books you would like to read or books you are just curious about. We're flexible! We KNOW there are readers out there who would enjoy our book club. Please help us find them. If you have questions, please contact Judi Carpenter (217-875-0092) and she will do her best to answer them.

**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

Everygreen Place

Mary Lou Phipps— Room 333

Fair Haven Christian Home

Lois Shelton—Room 113



Evangelism Talk

Some statistics on reasons people give for becoming Christians and for joining the church.

REASON GIVEN	% OF PEOPLE
Walked in on their own	4-6 %
Initially attracted by church programs	2-4 %
Initially attracted by the pastor	4-7 %
Turned to the church because of a special need	2-4 %
Approached by someone unknown from the church	1-2 %
Came because of Sunday School	4-6 %
Came because of a city-wide crusade event	.001 %
Came because of invitation or influence of friends/relatives	70-90 %

If we are excited and passionate about our church, we will tell our friends about it and the enthusiasm will be catching. But it all starts with us. We need to be in a passionate love affair with Jesus and his church.

Taken from The Messenger newsletter of the St. James and Zion-St. Peter United Church of Christ, Missouri



Harvest Celebration Sunday, September 18



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

- 5. Stephen Hill
- 6. Todd Clark
 Alfreda Tribout
- 7. Don Merritt
- 17. Ronald Palmer
- 19. Bobbie Taylor
- 20. Frank Smith
- 21. Marilyn Jordan
- 23. Amy Leman
 Don Moster
- 24. Robert Ruehrup
 Christina Huckile
- 25. Alex Miller
- 26. Mary Beck
- 28. Tyler Brownfield
 Tracy Johnson
- 31. Mark Jaberg

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!

- 4. Ted & Darby Mitchell
- 10. Joe Moretti & Maureen Ruski
- 11. Mark & Susan Daley
- 12. Everett & Shirley Kuhn
- 20. John & Ashley Lofland
- 21. Don & Debbie Moster
- 30. Stephen & Jamie Hill



FIRST SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

OCTOBER 2

LITURGIST: Marsha Mower

FLOWERS: Ted & Darby Mitchell

COFFEE:

USHERS/GREETER:

OCTOBER 9

LITURGIST: Ellen Starace

FLOWERS: Ev & Shirley Kuln

COFFEE:

USHERS/GREETER:

OCTOBER 16

LITURGIST: Melinda Redman

FLOWERS: Chris & Amy Leman

COFFEE:

USHERS/GREETER:

OCTOBER 23

LITURGIST: Sharon Burbes

FLOWERS: Kathy Richardson

COFFEE:

USHERS/GREETER:

OCTOBER 30

LITURGIST: Darla Weltmer

FLOWERS: Don & Dee Wenneke

COFFEE:

USHERS/GREETER:

SECOND SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

OCTOBER 2

USHER/GREETER: Mark &
Jeanette Flenner

REFRESHMENTS: Mark &
Jeanette Flenner

OCTOBER 9

USHER/GREETER: Leigh
Myers

REFRESHMENTS: Angie Miller

OCTOBER 16

USHER/GREETER: Ruski-
Moretti Family

REFRESHMENTS: Ruski-
Moretti Family

OCTOBER 23

USHER/GREETER: Buby
Voyles/Shirley Zimmerman

REFRESHMENTS: Ruby Voyles/
Shirley Zimmerman

OCTOBER 30

USHER/GREETER: Betty
Wheatley

REFRESHMENTS: Betty
Wheatley



