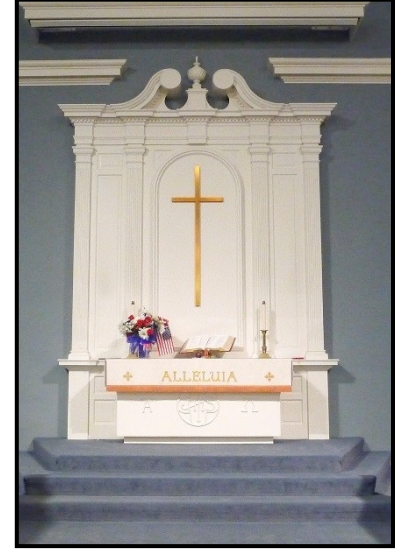


# Congregational Comments



Vol. 24 No. 10: October 2019

## Important Contacts in the Church

**Pastor:** Rev. Jan Johnson, 309-267-3260  
 Email: [jancastegnarojohnson@comcast.net](mailto:jancastegnarojohnson@comcast.net)  
**Prayer Chain:** Bette Fankhauser, 877-6723  
 Email: [blfankhauser@comcast.com](mailto:blfankhauser@comcast.com)  
**Playmates Preschool:** Interim Director: Alfreda Tribout  
**Newsletter Editor:** Bill Huebner, 876-1446, cell 855-7677  
 Email: [wshuebner.editor@prodigy.net](mailto:wshuebner.editor@prodigy.net)

## Church Contact Information:

3465 N. MacArthur Rd.  
 Decatur, IL 62526  
 Telephone: 877-2216  
 Email: [firstchurchdecatur@sbcglobal.net](mailto:firstchurchdecatur@sbcglobal.net)  
 Website: [www.firstchurchdecatur.org](http://www.firstchurchdecatur.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 Jan



**Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Matthew 5:7**

Mercy.....the meaning of the Greek word for 'mercy' (eleos: the personification of pity, mercy, clemency, and compassion) translates something like, 'trying to get into someone else's skin to understand things from his or her perspective. When we do this, it tends to change everything: we are more understanding with each other and less likely to hold grudges. We all need to give and receive more of this kind of mercy.

Grace.....the meaning of the Greek word for 'grace' (chari: Graciousness of manner or act, unmerited love and favor of God. Grace is from God and nothing we do can make God bless us with grace. Grace is totally undeserved (and most needed).

Grace, it has been said, is a greater gift than love (which is pretty great!) because grace is love in action. Because God loves us, God blesses us with grace.

The short shrift is: grace is getting what you don't deserve and mercy is not getting what you deserve.

I understand grace and mercy as bookends: grace is from God directly, mercy is through Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

There is no place where we can go that grace and mercy is not present. God's blessings of grace and mercy rest upon us, follow us, lead us, guide us, protect us each and every day of our lives. God asks us to share the blessings of grace and mercy with the people we meet and those we hear about, those who are needy, those who are not; those who are sick and those who are the picture of health; those we are different from us and those who are similar. In other words, to everyone!

The world would be a MUCH better place if Christians would be those who share these bookend blessings!

Offering You God's Grace and Mercy,

Rev. Jan



# Thank You

Thank you to The Endowment Foundation for it's annual contribution to the church. The Foundation gave the church \$8,000 with about \$5,000 to be used to replace the old chime system. The old chime system was 25 years old and there were no replacement parts available anymore.

Please be around the church at noon or 6:00 pm to hear the new chime system.



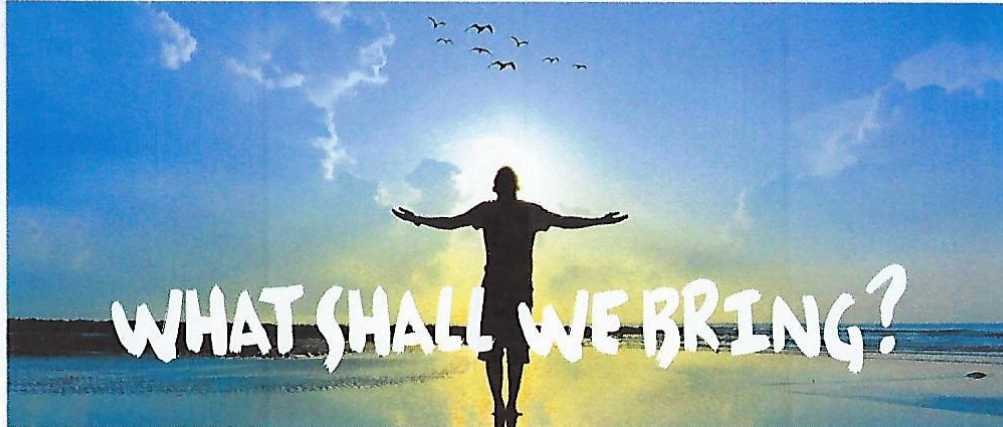
## Meals on Wheels

Thank you to these First Church volunteers who helped deliver Meals on Wheels the week of September 2:

Sharon and Mac Butler  
Ruth and Paul Debruine  
Mark and Jeanette Flenner  
Bill and Alice Huebner  
Ev and Shirley Kuhn  
Gerry and Peggy Ruff

If you would like to help deliver Meals on Wheels, our church is scheduled to deliver again in May. It is a one time commitment for about one hour and we work in teams of two. To be included on the list to help with this service project, just sign the Time and Talent sheet. Sue Bunselmeyer will be happy to contact you when we next deliver meals.

# Stewardship Campaign



## Gifts of Love

1 John 4:7-21

**T**here is a significant difference between ideals and values. Ideals are those things which we say we believe. Values are those things that our living says we believe. I might claim I am opposed to racism and that it is inconsistent with the Christian faith. However, unless I am living in intentional ways and making choices in my life to combat racism, it is just an ideal. When I actively participate in the process of dismantling systemic racism, even when it is at personal cost, it becomes a value. A friend of mine once said, "I can hear your ideals, but I can see your values."

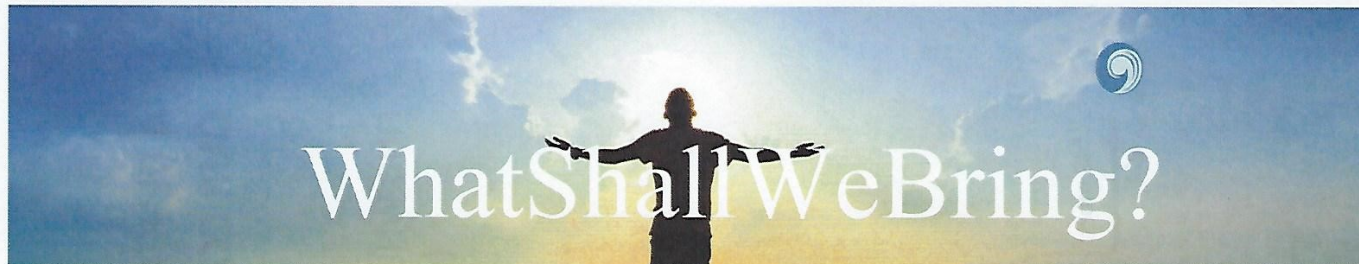
Claiming faith in Christ should lead to certain patterns of behavior if our faith is the basis for our values. The author of 1 John reminds us that to say we love God, but then live in ambivalence about our neighbor, is to have "outed ourselves as liars." The love we are to have for one another is one that is evidenced in selfless acts toward another, much in the same way that God displays Divine love for us.

Faith is action – it is verb. It is based on God's love for us and therefore it is fearless. It is willing to risk because it knows it can trust God for the outcome. How is it that people are to know we are Jesus' disciples? By the love we have for one another. The evidence is written all over our lives. Loving God implies loving neighbor as self.

So, what might "fearless stewardship" look like? What would it mean to give of ourselves so completely and confidently that our generosity would reflect our value of loving God and one another in the same way that God has loved us? What might our congregation look like if such a way of loving was more than just an ideal but something we truly valued?



# Stewardship Campaign Continued



Our life is a gift *from* God!  
What we do with our time, our talent, and our treasure is our gift *to* God!  
This is your Call to the season of Stewardship as we reflect on:

## What Shall We Bring?

Beginning **September 15<sup>th</sup>** and for 3 weeks we will have **Lay Stewardship Speakers** from the congregation AND **Agency Speakers** from agencies we support: D.O.V.E., Habitat for Humanity, NE Community Fund. It's important for us to hear the stories of faith these Lay and Agency speakers will share with us!

On **Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>** we will gather at noon in Fellowship Hall for  
**The Stewardship Thank You Celebration Luncheon**  
*You may bring your completed Pledge Card and Time and Talent's Sheet that day.*  
*Please R.S.V.P. by September 28<sup>th</sup> to the church office 217-877-2216*

**Sunday, October 6<sup>th</sup>** is **World Communion Sunday** and **Commitment Sunday**  
*You may bring your completed Pledge Card and Time and Talent's Sheet that day.*



# General Information

## **FFDO**

FFDO will meet on October 4 at 6:00 at Doherty's Pub. Please let me know if you can come

Sandy Harmison

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## **Decatur Area Church Women United**

Decatur Area Church Women United will meet on Monday, October 14th at 9:00 A.M. at Grace United Methodist Church, 901 N. Main Street for their Bible Study and their Representatives Meeting. Materials will be handed out for the participants in the World Community Day Celebration to be held on Nov. 1st at First Congregational United Church of Christ at 1:00 pm.

All are invited to attend. Questions call Darla Weltmer, 877-7008

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## **Eastern and Western Association Conference October 19**

First Church Women Fellowship is hosting the combined meeting of the Eastern and Western Association Conference on October 19. Anyone can attend the meetings but they are considered visitors; the voting members are delegates. Each Church has an Adult and a Youth voting delegate. Sandy Harmison has been our delegate.

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## **Annual Thanksgiving/Veteran's Lunch**

Please save the date of Sunday, November 10 for the Annual Thanksgiving/Veteran's lunch at 12 noon in the Fellowship Hall. Please bring a dish of your choosing to share.

Shirley Zimmerman and Julie Keck, Adult Ministry Co-Leaders.

# Homecoming Weekend

## Teaching and Tasting with Chef Michael Stubblefield Saturday, September 7



**Chef Stubblefield at work**

The Teaching and Tasting went very well to-day! 15 of us were able to taste incredible foods that are from Bible times (or foods made with food that was around during Bible times. This one should be an annual affair!

For those who missed it.....here are the recipes from Chef Stubblefield's Teaching and Tasting program:

### **Fried Goat Cheese Balls with Honey (with roasted almonds or pistachios)**

Canola Oil for frying  
¼ c cornstarch  
¾ c all-purpose flour  
1 cup Club Soda  
1-10oz log of fresh goat cheese  
Honey, chopped roasted almonds/pistachios  
And freshly ground pepper, for serving.  
3 c Panko lightly crushed  
Salt  
1 large egg, lightly beaten

Step 1. Cut goat cheese log into 16 pieces and roll each piece into a ball. Refrigerate on wax paper -lined baking sheet. (about 10 minutes)

Step 2. In a bowl, whisk the egg and club soda. Gradually whisk in the flour and cornstarch and season with salt. Spread the panko in a shallow bowl. Dip the cheese balls in the egg batter, dredge them in the panko. Coat the balls again in the egg batter and panko. Return them to the baking sheet and freeze just until firm. (about 15 min)

# Homecoming Weekend Continued

Step 3. In a large saucepan, heat 2 inches of canola oil to 375 degrees. Working in batches, fry the cheese balls over high heat, turning occasionally until golden and crisp, (about 2 minutes). Using a slotted spoon, transfer the balls to a paper towel-lined plate and season with Kosher salt. Transfer the cheese balls to a platter, drizzle with honey and sprinkle with pistachio's or almonds and pepper. Serve hot.

## Unleavened Bread

2 cups + 2 TBSP flour  
1 cup cold water  
½ tsp Kosher salt

1. combine salt and flour together in a large bowl, stir in the water until the dough comes together. Knead for 5 minutes.
2. pre-heat skillet over medium-low heat.
3. Pinch off 7 pieces of dough and form into balls. Roll out each piece on a lightly floured surface (approx.. 6-7" ovals)
4. Cook on a hot skillet for 2 minutes on each side. Serve or store covered.

## Roasted Honey Figs

15 ripe figs cut in half  
1 cup light honey  
4 tsp lemon juice  
Flakey sea salt such as Maldon for sprinkling

1. Preheat oven to 375 deg. Line a baking pan with parchment paper. Put figs on the pan, cut side up and drizzle with honey
2. Bake until bubbling, tender, and lightly caramelized, about 20 minutes
3. Remove from oven and sprinkle with lemon juice and salt. Serve warm

## Tapenade\*

½ pound pitted and mixed olives  
2 anchovy fillets, rinsed  
1 small clove garlic, minced  
2 TBLS capers  
2-3 fresh basil leaves  
1 TBLS freshly squeezed lemon juice  
2 TBLS extra virgin olive oil

1. Thoroughly rinse the olives in cool water. Place all ingredients in the bowl of a food processor. Process to combine, stopping to scrape down the sides of the bowl, until the mixture becomes a coarse paste, approx.. 1-2 minutes total. Transfer to a bowl and serve.

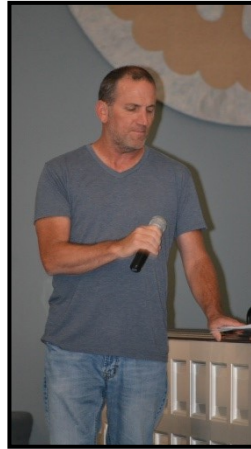
\*Chef Stubblefield put the Tapenade on the Matzah bread and served it in quarters.

Chef Stubblefield is also teaching a Foods of the Bible class this fall at RCC for all interested.

Additionally, Mound Chapel of God is hosting Chef to teach about Bible foods/herbs each Thursday from September 25 – November 6 – free to the public. Check with the church for times.

# Homecoming Weekend Continued

**Sunday, Continued with Praise Band Concert and Lunch on the Lawn**



**Members of the Praise Band**



**Lunch on the Lawn**



**Bingo  
And  
Crafts**

Photos by Dave Carpenter



# Growing Hope



## HARVEST OF HOPE GROWING PROJECT UPDATE – September 17

Our growing project corn crop has not yet reached physiological maturity (black layer). We are anxious to start harvest because the stalk quality is deteriorating. We hope to start harvest in about 10 days. We will not be having a Harvest Celebration this year, but we are planning another activity in Fellowship Hall for later in the season.

Our church members and friends are still bringing in their excess garden produce for sale by donation during Fellowship Hour. Check the table near the door for some last-of-the-season vegetables.

If you would like to participate in this project, there are envelopes in the church pews and on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall, or you may mark your donation "Growing Hope Globally" and the money counters will get it in the appropriate account. This is the 14<sup>th</sup> growing project for our church and these proceeds will benefit people in West Africa to help them become food sustainable and never go hungry again.



# Finance Notes

## JULY 2019 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>July 19</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$17,051.92	\$119,363.44
Budget Expense	\$17,947.02	\$125,629.14
Income	\$15,325.00	\$118,848.00
Expenses	\$15,620.62	\$119,867.93

## AUGUST 2019 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>Aug 19</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$17,051.92	\$136,415.36
Budget Expense	\$17,947.02	\$143,576.16
Income	\$14,308.88	\$133,156.88
Expenses	\$13,026.80	\$132,894.73



# Happenings

## FFDO

Doherty's Pub

October 4

6:00 pm



## God's Busy Hands

Tuesdays

1:00 - 3:00 pm



God's Busy Hands

## Admin Meeting

Monday, October 21

5:30 pm

## Council of Ministry Teams

Monday, October 21

6:30 pm

## Choir

Thursdays

7:00 pm



Sing With Us

## First Ringers

Thursdays

5:45 pm



## Exploring Christian Faith Study Group

Sunday 10:30 am

Choir Room

# October 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.

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

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  
Erick Hubbard  
26. Mary Beck  
28. Tracy Johnson  
31. Mark Jaberg

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



# First Church Sunday Morning

	Date	9:00 AM Service	11:00 AM Service
 <b>LITURGISTS</b>	October 6	Mindy Bunselmeyer	Wes Pietsch
	October 13	Ellen Starace	Steve & Kelli Fonseca
	October 20	Marilee Gordon	Shirley Zimmerman & Ruby Voyles
	October 27	Melinda Redman	Betty Wheatley
 <b>Altar Flowers</b>	October 6	Debby Beal	
	October 13	Ev & Shirley Kuhn	
	October 20	Betty Henry	
	October 27	Don & Dee Wenneker	
 <b>Fellowship hour</b>	October 6	Kristin Hargrove	Wes Pietsch
	October 13	Lynn & Darla Weltmer	Steve & Kelli Fonseca
	October 20	Marlene Gant	Missy Boldizar
	October 27	Kristin Hargrove	Betty Wheatley
 <b>USHERS</b>	October 6	Dave Carpenter, Ev Kuhn, Kristin Hargrove, Paula Cordts	
	October 13	The Butts Family	
	October 20	Mindy Bunselmeyer, Susan Daley, Brandon & Valerie Janvrin	
	October 27	Marlene Gant, Mike Koyak, Darla Weltmer, Chuck Zweck	

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

# October Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-Anon 8:00 AA	2	3 5:45 Bell Choir Practice 7:00 Choir Practice	4	5 Noon Stewardship Luncheon
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	10 5:45 Bell Choir Practice 7:00 Choir Practice	11	12
13 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellow ship Hour 11:00 Con- temporary	14 7:00 Property Ministry	15 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-Anon 8:00 AA	16	17 5:45 Bell Choir Practice 7:00 Choir Practice	18	19 Eastern & Western Association Conference Meeting
20 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellow ship Hour 11:00 Con- temporary	21 5:30 Admin 6:30 Council Of Ministry Teams	22 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 Al-Anon 8:00 AA	23	24 5:45 Bell Choir Practice 7:00 Choir Practice	25	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	31 5:45 Bell Choir Practice 7:00 Choir Practice		



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

## 2019 Church Goals

Your Council of Ministry Teams has approved the following 3 goals for 2019:

### 2019 Church Goals

- Goal No. 1—Reestablish an active evangelism ministry
- Goal No. 2—Instituting new fellowship programs for working women, men and young families
- Goal No. 3—Hire a new pastor for the church.