

Congregational Comments

Vol. 21 No 9: September 2016

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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.



Pastor Jan Johnson

FROM THE PASTOR

September brings us many blessings – cooler weather than in July, apples, school, football games, Rally Day, Stewardship moments, beautiful sunsets and harvest moons! Welcome to Autumn! With so many blessings how can we help but say “Thank You God”!

There are so many opportunities to serve our brothers and sisters on this journey that it’s hard to choose! We can help with Rally Day! We can offer a prayer for someone who is sick or homebound. We can visit a friend we haven’t seen in a while. We can teach Sunday School! We can share our faith; how God has helped us throughout our life. We can sing and pray and worship and praise God! We can show thanks to God in everything we do – at work, at school, with family, with friends, at home, at committee meetings, just EVERYWHERE! Our God is always ready and willing to bless us when we serve others and when we offer God our praise. Always.

It’s not always easy to do this! Everyone has a bad day once in a while. That’s the time when we need to show God our faithfulness. That’s the time when we need to praise more, pray more, sing more, thank more, serve more. Remember, the joy of the Lord is our strength! Say it over and over and over again! The joy of the Lord is our strength! The Joy of the Lord is our Strength!

Now, find someone to help and start feeling alive in Christ!

Blessings of Grace and Peace!

Jan

Getting in the Mood for Stewardship! “Beverly Hillbillies Bible Study!” Sept. 18, 25, Oct. 2, and 9. Spend 4 Sundays with the Beverly Hillbillies and reflect on the Blessings God has gifted to you! We will watch the first 4 Beverly Hillbillies TV shows – 1 per Sunday. First Sunday is all about Blessings. The second Sunday is ‘\$25 Million and Change’. There are workbook sheets for conversation and your own personal reflection. We will meet in the Lounge at 10am (feel free to get some breakfast and then join us!)





Confirmation



Confirmation

Calling All Confirmation-age Students and Parents

It's time to think about Confirmation Class! If your child is in 7th Grade or older and has not yet been through Confirmation Class and made their profession of faith through the Rite of Confirmation, please call the church office or let Rev. Jan know. Once we have the names of all students we can decide on the best time to meet. Class will begin the week after Rally Day which is September 11.



And if any adults are interested in a ReConfirmation Class, please let Rev. Jan know. If there is enough interest we can do a modified Confirmation experience for the adults!

First Friday Dinner Out

First Friday Dinner Out: For September we will be meeting at Paco's Sol Bistro on September 2 at 6:00. Please let me know by Wednesday, August 31 if you are planning on attending.

Sandy Harmison

Annual Women's Retreat

All women are invited to the Illinois Conference 6th annual women's retreat at Pilgrim Park. The retreat begins at 4:30 on Friday, September 30 and ends at 3:30 on Saturday, October 1. Register before September 23 by going online at <http://www.il-outdoorministries.org>. Cost is \$105 which includes three meals and a bed at the lodge. This year's topic is "Blooming Where You're Planted". Please feel free to ask questions of those of us who have attended previously. That includes Debby Beal, Marsha Mower, Maureen Ruski, Jeanette Flenner and Sandy Harmison.





FIRST CHURCH
FOODS RESOURCE BANK
GROWING PROJECT

OUR CORN CROP -- Our Foods Resource Bank growing project corn crop should be maturing in early to mid September. We would like a gentle rain before maturity but no heavy rain and no wind. We will start looking at varieties the second half of August and make comparisons and predictions which will let us determine a date for the Harvest Celebration.

PIE AUCTION – This year we are “growing” pies for our FRB project and auctioning them to the highest bidder between church services one Sunday a month. Our next auction is **Sunday, August 28**. Be there!



GARDEN PRODUCE AVAILABLE – Watch the FRB Outreach table in Fellowship Hall for fresh garden produce. Church members have been growing vegetables and will be sharing their surplus with us. Everyone is encouraged to “shop” from our table and give a donation for our FRB growing project fund.

If you would like to contribute to the expenses of the 2016 FRB Growing Project corn crop, you may use the envelopes in the pews or mark another envelope accordingly. Please make your check payable to First Congregational UCC. Proceeds of this crop will support a sustainable food program in the developing world in a country that our church selects to help people learn the dignity and pride of feeding themselves.

CAVE QUEST

Following Jesus – The Light of the World

Matthew 19:14 - Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Our VBS 2016 goal was to share the Word of God with as many children as possible again this summer. We touched the lives of 30 children (20 families) and 31 youth and/or adult volunteers this year, along with the involvement of three ministries of the church. We had an exciting and action-packed week! Many of you volunteered to be part of **Cave Quest** and we thank you for your willingness to participate. We offered meals for our volunteers Monday - Thursday.

Each evening, all school-age children participated in *Sing & Play Rock* (where we heard from *Clark Cavern*) and *Cave Quest Closing with Spotlight VBS*. The Crews rotated between Deep Bible Quests, KidVid Cinema, Spelunker Sports & Games, Cavern Café, and Imagination Station. Our Tad's Preschool Pool children joined in *Sing & Play Rock* and had their own self-contained program in their own area of the building, with their very own *Cave Quest Closing*. Families were invited to join us in the sanctuary for *Cave Quest Closing* where we reviewed the day's activities, sang songs, and watched our Spotlight VBS video.

Music CDs were available for learning and enjoying the wonderful VBS songs all year long!

Through our *Operation Kid-to-Kid* mission project, we raised money to help hurting families in North America and shine hope into homes in need. During the week, participants brought in monetary donations of all sizes – it all made a difference. The donations will be sent to Group Cares, for the "tools" they need to resource teams of teenagers and other volunteers. On Sunday at Imagination Station, kids were given Change-a-Home Paper Banks to take home and decorate - then use them to collect coins or spare change for this mission project.

We were truly blessed to have an AWESOME spirit-filled week again this year! We were blessed by many monetary contributions, as well as time and talents. We could not have done it without the support and prayers of our church family. Thank you and God Bless you all!

Director: Marsha Mower



Sunday – Jesus give us hope. (Sal)
Prophets foretell the light of the world. (John 1:1-18; Isaiah 9:2)
“O Lord, you alone are my hope.” (Psalm 71:5)

Monday – Jesus gives us courage. (Mawtha)
Jesus and Peter walk on water. (Matthew 14:22-36)
“Take courage. I am here!” (Matthew 14:27)



Tuesday – Jesus gives us direction. (Radar)
Jesus sheds light on how to live. (Matthew 5-7.)
“He will show you which path to take.” (Proverbs 3:6)

Wednesday – Jesus gives us love. (Olivia)
Jesus dies and comes back to life. (Luke 23:1-24: 12)
“We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us.” (1 John 3:16)



Thursday – Jesus gives us his power. (Ray)
Jesus ascends and empowers his followers. (Acts 1:1-11)
“Our great power is from God, not from ourselves.” (2 Corinthians 4:7)



VOLUNTEERS: Carol Blackwell, Missy Boldizar, Mindy Bunselmeyer, Dave Carpenter, Hannah Cordts, Jeanette Flenner, Mark Flenner, Brenda Garry, Katie Hammon, Christina Huckile, James Huckile, Rev. Jan Johnson, Katy Koyak, Ashley Lofland, Pat Mahr, Darby Mitchell, Kathy Moore, Devon Moretti, Joe Moretti, Malone Moretti, Marsha Mower, Leigh Myers, Kathy Richardson, Stratus Roberts, Carol Robertson, Jill Robertson, Tommy Robertson, Robert Ruehrup, Maureen Ruski, Grace Stanley, Dee Wenneker, Chuck Zweck

Continued on Next Page

Our thanks to:

- ◇ Children's, Evangelism, and Outreach Ministries
- ◇ Westminster and Mt. Zion Presbyterian Churches for building and sharing the set.
- ◇ Set "assembly crew" - Joe Moretti, Carol/Joe Robertson, Maureen Ruski
- ◇ "Extra" hands for all the miscellaneous organizing, prep and room set-up work – Marsha Mower
- ◇ Special thanks to all who donated snacks/food and/or worked in the kitchen for the volunteer staff meals (Jodi Baldwin, Mindy Bunselmeyer, Sharon Burbes, Martha Crookshank, Peggy Druessel, Jeanette Flenner, Marlene Gant, Sandy Harmison, Shirley Kuhn, Darby Mitchell, Norma/Steve Morrison, Wes Pietsch, Kathy Richardson, Susan/Mark Schleeter, Ellen Starace, Ruby Voyles, Ellen/Clint Whitrock, Shirley Zimmerman)

KIDS: Graham Blackwell, Rylan Blackwell, Emery Bunselmeyer, Gehrig Bunselmeyer, Jasper Cook, Kallissa Crocker, Noah Crocker, Emma Crowley, Isaiah Janvrin, Quincy Janvrin, Wyatt Kauzlarich, Azrielle Lauper-Cook, Chase Leman, Quinn Leman, Mya Lofland, Cameron Malone, Maddie Michael, Parker Michael, Aidan Miller, Miranda Miller, Andrew Mower, Allie Nichols, Lexy Oliver, Asher Putnam, Ella Rhoades, Madison Rhodes, Sable Roberts, Logan Wenneker, Mia Wenneker, Ava Wheeler

THANK YOU

"The Breakfast Crew has had several Sundays off this summer. Thanks to Rob and Kathy Moore, the Music Choirs, Worship Music Ministry, Mindy Bunselmeyer and Amy Leman, and God's Busy Hands for stepping in to host Fellowship Hour on these Sundays. We appreciate the vacation time and the rest that their help has given us. Thanks much!"

Thanks,
Sue

Decatur Area Church Women United

Decatur Area Church Women United will be holding their Human Rights Celebration on Monday, September 12th at 9:00 AM at the New Salem Baptist Church, 352 W. Wood Street. The theme is "Experiencing Blessings at the Table". Questions arising are What kind of fruit should we be bearing as Christians? - What kind of life is pleasing to the Lord? - How do you know God's will? or How can you use God's power for greater good in your community? - These are just some of the questions being discussed at our Gathering. I encourage any of you to attend with me. Questions you need answered please call Darla Weltmer, 877-7008 or e-mail Lmweltmer@juno.com. I would welcome you to come along with me.



YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!

We need to inventory ALL the keys that are currently out in the congregation, so we have a complete list of "who has what and why". If you are in possession of ANY keys for the church, please contact Peggy in the church office (877-2216 or firstchurchdecatur@sbcglobal.net) and tell her your name, the identity of the keys you have and why you need them. As an example of the "identity," all exterior door keys and office door keys should have letters, numbers or both on them (i.e.: A, A2, FC, etc.). Other interior keys may have stickers on them identifying what they are for or you may just know what they unlock. It is very important that we get this information from you as soon as possible. As a reminder, ministry chairs and officers are supposed to turn their keys back in to the office when their terms end. Thanks, in advance, for your assistance. Marsha Mower, President

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
 <p>SEPTEMBER</p>			
<p>4 9:00 Traditional 10:00 Fellowship Hour 11:00 Contemporary</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA</p>	<p>7 7:30 Cho</p>
<p>11 12:00-3:00 Rally Day</p>	<p>12 5:30 Admin</p>	<p>13 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA</p>	<p>14 4:15-6:45 7:00 Cho</p>
<p>18 Consecration Kickoff Lay Speaker #1</p>	<p>19 7:00 Church Council</p>	<p>20 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA</p>	<p>21 4:15-6:45 7:00 Cho</p>
<p>25 Lay Speaker #2</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27 1:00 God's Busy Hands 7:00 AA: Al-anon 8:00 AA</p>	<p>28 4:15-6:45 7:00 Cho</p>

	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3
ir	8	9	10
5 LOGOS ir	15 1:15 Book Club 5:45 First Ringers	16	17
5 LOGOS ir	22 5:45 First Ringers	23	24
5 LOGOS ir	29 5:45 First Ringers	30	

From Your Pastoral Search Committee...

We asked, you answered!

Thank you to all who responded.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
DECATUR, ILLINOIS

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS

TOP THIRTEEN ITEMS

1. Is an effective preacher/speaker
2. Is effective in planning and leading worship
3. Ministers effectively to persons in crisis situations
4. Make pastoral calls on people in hospitals and nursing homes and those confined to their homes
5. Is effective in working with children
6. Works regularly at bringing new members into the church
7. Reaches out to inactive members
8. Is effective in working with youth
9. Encourages people to relate their faith to their daily lives
10. Is mature and emotionally secure
11. Maintains confidentiality
12. Is a compassionate and caring person
13. Deals effectively with conflict

LOGOS

We are getting ready for our sixteenth year of LOGOS this fall at First Congregational United Church of Christ. This is an exciting opportunity for children and youth, as well as the adults who serve. As you may know, LOGOS is a mid-week, inter-generational, relationship building program for children and youth in **1st through 12th grades**. LOGOS meets most Wednesdays from mid-September through early-April from 4:15 p.m. - 6:45 p.m.

There are four parts to this weekly ministry: Bible Study - where they are nurtured into intelligent and biblically-informed discipleship; Worship Skills - where they learn preparation to lead the worship service; Recreation - where they are allowed to experience great fun at the expense of no one else; and Family Time - where they are assigned to a table along with adults who act as "table parents" and experience being a family of God over a home-cooked shared meal served family-style on real dishes with cloth tablecloths and napkins. There are registration fees, which help to defray costs of the meals and program supplies, with scholarships available upon request.

We already have a group of nine children and youth committed to participate this year and would love to share this ministry with others! If you have anyone in your circle of friends who might be interested in the program, please share this information with them and have them contact us as soon as possible.

Your LOGOS MINISTRY: Sharon Burbes, Jeanette Flenner, Sandy Harmison, Sheila Mannweiler, Marsha Mower, Maureen Ruski, and Chuck Zweck

<p>SEPTEMBER</p> <p>11 - Rally Day 14 - Staff Gathering 5:30-7:00 21 - Welcome to LOGOS 28 - School Pride</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 2016</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>S</th> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>Th</th> <th>F</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> <td>16</td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18</td> <td>19</td> <td>20</td> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> <td>28</td> <td>29</td> <td>30</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	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		<p>OCTOBER</p> <p>5 - Batter Up 12 - Little Italy 19 - NO LOGOS 26 - Trunk or Treat (parking lot 4:15-6:45)</p>
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LOGOS meets 4:15 - 6:45pm, unless otherwise noted.

GENERATION CHANGE

The youth group Bible study teens will love. And every teen needs!

As parents, it's our responsibility to make sure our kids grow up with an understanding of who they are in Christ and how to apply His principles to every aspect of their lives. But it is no easy task. We often don't feel equipped to get these truths deep down into our teens' hearts and minds. Wouldn't it be nice if there was a fun way to make sure they got it? There is... and you can get it!

Generation Change is a three-series, nine-lesson DVD suite that teaches teens what we all need to know, like our value in Christ and how to handle money.

This series will start on Sunday, **September 18th at 5:00 p.m.** in Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$21.00 for the books. Scholarships are available.

Anyone interested in signing up or if you have questions contact Joe Moretti by phone or text at 433-0522, or email ajmo40@comcast.net.

Here is a brief preview –

BE WHO GOD CREATED (Series 1)

Teens will discover that their identity isn't wrapped up in what the world says about them, but what God says about them. They'll gain confidence to stand up against clever marketing and find value in contentment, realizing that it's not about how much money you have, but what you do with that money that matters.

DO MORE WITH YOUR MONEY (Series 2)

Teens will learn the basics of money: how to budget, manage a checking account, and spend wisely. They'll also see the benefits of saving for the future, tithing to the church and giving to those in need-and why it's important to start right away! Lastly, teens will begin to recognize the difference between a need and a want and plan accordingly.

GO WRITE YOUR STORY (Series 3)

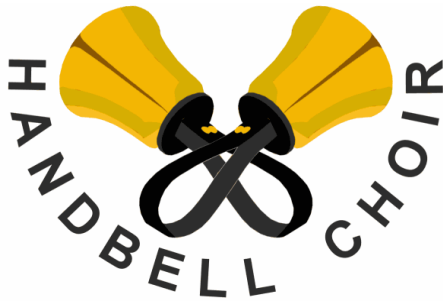
Teens will gain a wealth of knowledge about the real world. This series covers everything from the truth about credit cards and student loans to guidance on pursuing their purpose, planning for life after high school, and beyond! It's chock full of advice that will help your teens realize their God-given potential without the baggage of debt or regret.

THANK YOU

The church received a couple of very nice thank you letters from Christine and James Huckile Both were thanking the church for helping them go to Spirit Camp at Pilgrim Park. The two letters are posted on the bulletin board across from the church office.

JULY 2016 FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>July 16</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget Income	\$18,431.00	\$129,017.00
Budget Expense	\$17,971.56	\$125,800.92
Income	\$20,376.37	\$130,585.71
Expenses	\$18,560.44	\$115,525.87



Yes, it is time to begin another season for FIRST RINGERS. The onset of rehearsals will be in the Fellowship Hall on Thursday, September 15th at 5:45PM. If you would like to mart, pluck, shake and ring with us, be sure to attend; we are looking to increase the size of our ensemble. Bring yourself, neighbor, friend, foe, relative, associate, colleague, acquaintance, stranger, somebody and/or anybody..., and join our collection of state-of-the-art musicians.

“Direct” questions to head (w)ringer, Bette Lynn Fankhauser at 877-6723.

REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR AND VISIT MEMBERS WHO ARE IN ASSISTANT LIVING AND NURSING HOMES

Primrose Retirement Community

Claude Young—Room 228

Lois Shelton—Room 132

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



**RALLY DAY WEEKEND
CELEBRATE THE
OLYMPICS!**



*Bring your Family and Friends!
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC
3465 N. MACARTHUR*

- *DR. ROBERT CARNEY and his LEGO
PRESENTATION
Thursday, September 8th at 6:30pm
Dessert and coffee*

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11TH

- *INTERNATIONAL BUFFET at 11:45am*
- *AMAZING DUDLEY MAGIC at 12:30pm*
 - *OLYMPIC GAMES at 1:15pm*
 - ◆ *Hurdles*
 - ◆ *Long Jump*
 - ◆ *Field Run*
 - ◆ *Jump Rope*
 - ◆ *Water Balloon Shot Put*
 - *BINGO*
 - *CAKE WALK INTERNATIONAL*
 - *OLYMPIC PHOTO BOOTH*



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

1. Janice Kahila
Pam Mueller
3. Patty Stemple
5. Helen Johnson
Everett Kuhn
9. Rikki Brady
Nathan Harmison
10. Gehrig Bunselmeyer
12. James Huckile
13. Marie Bauer
Thomas Cordts
Patrick Malone
Malone Moretti
14. Ronald Brownfield
Nicholas Lauer
17. Carolyn Jones
18. Kathy Moore
19. Kyle Brownfield
20. Shelly Smith
21. Alyssa Baker
Sherry Palmer
Brandon Janvrin
22. Katie Hill
23. Aidan Seitz
24. Olivia Wernecke
Angie Miller
25. Susan Schleeter
27. Phyllis Campbell
Ashley Lofland
30. Beverly Capshaw

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. Charles & Alfreda Tribout
7. Homer & Nancy Leoucis
8. Jerry & Patty Stemple
19. Howard & Nancy Beede
22. David & Pat Mahr



FIRST SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER 4

LITURGIST: Mindy Bunselmeyer

FLOWERS: Betty Cummings

COFFEE: Betty Henry, Marlene Gant

USHERS/GREETER:

SEPTEMBER 11

LITURGIST: Dee Wenneker

FLOWERS: Ned & Sandy Cummings

COFFEE: Jodi & Jim Baldwin

USHERS/GREETER:

SEPTEMBER 18

LITURGIST: Judi Carpenter

FLOWERS: Ellen Starace

COFFEE: Sandy Pleasants

USHERS/GREETER:

SEPTEMBER 25

LITURGIST: Chuck Zweck

FLOWERS: Gerry & Peggy Ruff

COFFEE: Peggy Druessel

USHERS/GREETER:

SECOND SERVICE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER 4

USHER/GREETER: Wes Pietsch

REFRESHMENTS: Wes Pietsch

SEPTEMBER 11

USHER/GREETER: Sandy Harmison

REFRESHMENTS: Sandy Harmison

SEPTEMBER 18

USHER/GREETER: Ruby Voyles/Shirley Zimmerman

REFRESHMENTS: Ruby Voyles/Shirley Zimmerman

SEPTEMBER 25

USHER/GREETER: Missy Boldizar

REFRESHMENTS: Praise Band



From Your Church President.....

I'm happy to report things continue to move forward at First Church, but not quite as rapidly as earlier in the year (WHEW)! We have been blessed with wonderful, spirit-filled worship services this summer and look forward to our fall program year beginning in September. Thanks be to God!

Reverend Jan Johnson began her Designated Pastorate with us on July 1. She has been very busy getting to know us and how we "do church" here in Decatur. I hope you have taken advantage of the "meet and greet" sessions she is holding. This is an opportunity for her to get to know you and your family and for you to get to know her.

Our Pastoral Search Committee has been diligently working on all the tasks involved in seeking and calling our next "permanent" pastor. Rev. Tom Norwalk met with them for training on June 28 and they "hit the road running." This dedicated groups of folks (Don Wenneker, chair; Jeanette Flenner; Ev Kuhn; Chris Lemam; Devon Moretti; Peggy Ruff; Terry Stoa; and Marsha Mower, President, ex-officio/non-voting member, as recommended by our Association/Conference guidelines) has surveyed the congregation and finalized the three required profiles. We are now "live" in the UCC world as seeking a pastor. They are awaiting the first set of candidate profiles; which Rev. Norwalk will be bringing soon.

Our new Office Manager, Peggy Mennel, is settling in nicely and quickly getting up to speed on all the many duties of her office.

The four goals that were approved for First Church this year are back on track and work continues on all of them.

God bless each and every one of you for your patience, prayers and support! GOD IS GOOD and continues to bless us with new opportunities! We have much to be thankful for and much to be in prayer about. I hope you continue praying with me for the wisdom to "listen" for the plans God has for us and to do our "listening" with an ear open to His will, not our own.

Marsha Mower, Church President