

First
Chronicles
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**First Congregational Church of
Evanston**

Hinman and Grove Evanston, IL 60201
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FROM THE PASTOR

ECOLOGY AND THE NEW STEWARDSHIP

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands. (Psalm 8:3-6)

Ah, May! You go for walks some days in May, and Oh! the refreshing, new colors and odors of nature: the annual explosion of flowers from the ground, blossoming trees and shrubs, grass freshly mown, earth newly cultivated. If the earth is our mother (and I suggest this even though I'll be challenging the assertion in a sermon, this month), then what better month is there in which to hold Mother's Day!

It never fails, though, that I'll get myself into just such a reverie when some dire and foreboding warning of global climate change will rear its ugly head. It is too bad that we have to be so rudely reminded of the crucial importance of our stewardship of this planet. But necessary it is!

Numerous initiatives are being undertaken by faithful people who understand the pivotal nature of our role in creation. Nearby, the latest and most impressive effort has been made by the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, whose members commissioned a "green" building to house their worship and outreach. But I read also in a certain denominational newspaper recently about "Green Churches" in New England and California, faith communities who have endeavored together to create or recreate closed environments that can keep the surrounding environment healthy.

The Reconstructionists and others have had to spend no small amount of money in creating the buildings where their ministries are housed.

That's the irony of this kind of stewardship. Stewardship used to mean simply, *frugality*, getting the most "bang out of your buck." But very often American frugality is energy intensive, and often the cheapest things in terms of price come with high costs to the environment. A t-shirt may end its journey to you from a discount store shelf, but it usually begins on a cotton plantation in the plains of central Asia. You can imagine the steps in between, all of which are connected by some kind of fossil fuel driven transportation.

Stewardship of the earth and our resources has never seemed so complicated. Still, if we work together to respect and tend our environment, it need not be so hard. As we engage this magnificent month of May, remember to be good to your mother.

Peace.
Pastor Dave Denoon

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY



FROM THE MODERATOR SCANNING THE HORIZON

What a time it's been! Shortly after the start of the New Year we began a new chapter in the life of our congregation by welcoming our new pastor. Many of us felt a sense of accomplishment at having reached this long-anticipated goal. But having reached that objective, we're now looking ahead and asking the next obvious question:

Now what?

It's a new day – a time of new beginnings. And as we scan the horizon ahead of us, we can see almost limitless opportunities to start afresh, to try new ideas and to move in new directions.

But of course, we're not starting this journey without preparation. We did lots of work during our interim time, reflecting on who we are as a faith community as well as the goals and priorities we've set for ourselves. We learned that we, as a church, want to:

- Maintain our tradition of high quality worship.
- Strengthen our children and youth programs.
- Enhance our sense of family by improving both "inreach" to members and "outreach" to our community.
- Create a nurturing environment in which all our members can feel safe, knowing they are encouraged to share their individual beliefs.
- Develop a positive church identity that clarifies our shared vision, our ethics, and our sense of purpose.
- Discuss strategies for church growth, and how that growth would change the Church.
- Develop a long-range plan to address chronic infrastructure and financial problems.

As we survey the horizon stretched out before us, there's a certain sense of awe at the opportunities and challenges we face. Some are old, familiar and frustrating. Others are new, unexpected and inspiring. One thing is for certain – we, as the faith community, will never lack for things to do!

This, of course, is where you come in. A Congregational church is ultimately a reflection of the faith and beliefs of its members transformed into action. Our church is shaped by who we are,

by what we believe, and how we act on those beliefs.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "You must be the change you want to see in the world." So it is with our church.

As *you* scan the horizon ahead, as *you* look into our future, what do you see? And more importantly, what will you do to bring those visions to life?

There are many ways to be a part of the life of our church. Could you find a few hours to visit a hospitalized member or shut-in? Could you share your faith and knowledge by teaching a Sunday school class or leading an adult education workshop? Could you be part about a mission team working for the betterment of our community? Whatever you do, large or small, would be your way of making this the church *you* want it to become. And it would be welcomed as a true expression of who we are – collectively – as a community of faith.

As we look out at the broad horizon in front of us and consider this new day in the life of our church, we can't help but call to mind the words of Rev. Lou Hopfe from a 1982 sermon reprinted recently in this newsletter:

"Congregationalists ... are challenged in terms of their time and service. If we are priests, if we are all equal, if we are all equal in voting strength, the only way we will survive is if we all serve the church. We work through committees and committee work is long and hard and boring. It would be easier to turn all this work over to a panel of experts, but that is not the Congregational way. For us to succeed means that each of you must be willing to serve, advise, help, paint, etc. There is no easy way out."

To which we can only say, "Amen!" Unless, perhaps, we add yet another quote from Gandhi:

"The world will not change if we don't change."

The future... and our church... will be whatever we make of it. As we move ahead, let's begin to be the change we want to see.

Joe Page
Moderator, FCCE Ministry Council

MUSIC

PLEASE HELP SUPPORT SANCTUARY ORGAN REPAIRS

After 80 years of faithful service, our historic 1927 Skinner pipe organ is in need of repair. The tops of white keys are coming unglued and falling off. Erickson, Christian, and Associates, the respected Chicago company that has been servicing our organ, has submitted a proposal to replace all 108 white key tops on the three manuals. Our goal is to raise \$7500, or \$70 per key. If you are able to help underwrite the cost of this important repair, your assistance will be greatly appreciated. Any financial assistance - large or small - could be made payable by check to the First Congregational Church with the memo "organ repair." Please contact David Lornson, Director of Music, if you have further questions.

MANY USHERS AND GREETERS TRAINED

In a session he titled, *Hospitality 101*, Pastor Dave Denoon offered some orientation to about 20 church members who are currently serving as ushers or greeters. The class offered a biblical understanding of *Why we show hospitality* and some suggestions for *Hospitality as Evangelism*, emphasizing the importance of First Church's wide welcome. *Hospitality 101* will be repeated in summer, as will *Hospitality 102*, a more in-depth session led by seasoned ushers and greeters describing the logistics of their work on Sundays.

DEVELOPMENT & FINANCE SEEKING "LIKE NEW" OFFICE FURNITURE

In an effort to renew the appearance of the front office, conference office, and pastor's office, new carpeting and paint have been ordered, paid for with endowment funds, and will be applied in the next few weeks.

Now, there is a need to replace much of the furniture. If you know of an inexpensive or free resource for replacement desks and chairs for the front and pastor's offices (the conference room furniture is staying), please contact Lacey Ogbolumani.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

WHAT'S GOING ON IN SUNDAY SCHOOL

During the Month of May we will look at the stories of Zacchaeus, Peter at Pentecost, Paul and Lydia. Through these stories we will learn about how God's presence in our lives can completely change us.

Our Bible verse is "Anyone who belongs to Christ is a new person. The past is forgotten and everything is new." 2 Corinthians 5: 17 (CEV)

SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

- May 4** Sunday School
Grades 6 and up remain in worship
- May 11** Mother's Day
- May 18** Graduation Sunday for our Seniors
Julia Page, Charles Krause, Jehu Shamlin, Liza Sprague, Ross Donnan
- May 25** Memorial Day - Childcare only, no Sunday School, worship packs

SURFIN' THE SCRIPTURES WILL BEGIN ON JUNE 22 AT 9:00

This summer we are rearranging our summer programming. After hearing from many parents about the busy-ness of summer days—camp, swimming lessons, etc. and the desire to have Vacation Bible School, just not every night for eight nights.

In response, we are going to try something different, Summer Vacation Sunday School! On Sunday mornings all children and youth are invited to join us at 9:00 to surf the scriptures, as we learn stories from the Old and New Testament, riding the waves to building our faith. There will be games, and food and fun!

If you are interested in volunteering to teach Summer Vacation Bible School please contact Lacey Ogbolumani or Deb Shamlin.

NEW THIS SUMMER! STARTING JULY 6



An exciting **new** Adult Sunday School Class will begin on July 6. Watch the Sunday bulletin, next month's newsletter for more information, and the website-
www.firstchurchevanston.org.

CONFIRMATION

On April 13, our senior class of 8th and 9th Grade Confirmation students, their parents, and mentors met for the first time in a full session together. Pastor Dave introduced them to the curriculum, *Making Disciples* by William Willimon, and had them all do an introductory exercise, creating timelines of their lives. This made for an enlightening and enjoyable afternoon.

Mentors and students are reminded that they need to conduct at least one one-on-one session between now and June 1, when the next full meeting of the students, mentors, and Pastor Dave will occur. Please see Pastor Dave with any questions about the curriculum or exercises, and remember to coordinate your one-on-one meetings with students' parents.

In addition to getting better acquainted, the senior Confirmation students will be exploring the subjects of "The Bible" and "Worship" with their mentors, this month. To do this, they will be attending worship at First, at other Christian congregations, and at a local synagogue and mosque.

Please include the students and their mentors and parents in your prayers, as they spend this late spring and all of summertime, preparing for their Confirmation on Rally Day, September 7. The Confirmation partners are (with parents or households represented in parentheses):

Sam Sprague (Hal & Patty Sprague) — Joe Page
 Emma Schmahl (Jerry Schmahl and Kathy Vissman) — Laima Day
 Abigail Julcher (Christopher & Kristin Julcher)
 — Travis Clifton
 Luke Perkins (Eric Perkins and Susan Cerza)
 — Andrew Nelson
 Jane Koestring (Tom & Kathy Koestring)
 — Peggy Tinzmann
 Matthew Munro (Nancy Anderson & Bob Krause)
 — Alan Cabbage
 Hayley Chill (Beth & Bram Chill)
 — Jennifer French

SUNDAY FORUMS

After worship, bring your coffee and join us in the front pews of the sanctuary.

May 4 **Intentional Inclusive Language at FCCE**

Truly inclusive language affirms sexuality, racial and ethnic background, stages of maturity and degrees of limiting conditions. It shows respect for all people. What are the principles for inclusive language? How can we show our commitment to using inclusive language in our church and daily life? In May Pastor Dave will touch on inclusive language in his sermons. Join us for this forum as we explore inclusive language as a preface to those sermons.

May 11 Happy Mother's Day – No Forum

May 18 **Because My Mother Told Me**

God speaks to us often, sometimes through the simple goodness of our mothers. How is it that Moses sensed, after years of privilege that he should be concerned about those without? How was it he could not forget he was a Hebrew? Join us as we look at some of the mother's we find in the Bible.

May 25 Memorial Day Holiday- No Forum

OUTREACH

BENEVOLENCE

The Benevolence Committee of the Mission/Outreach Ministry has completed its distribution of funds for 2007-2008. The six committee members are Bram Chill, Bob Gaskill, Trimmy Stammel, Dawn Christensen Steele, Cherie Weil and Lyn Page. The funding process began in October, 2007, when letters of inquiry were sent to past recipients, as well as to new organizations suggested by members of the congregation. By December, the interested organizations had provided us with information about their needs, activities and financial status. After our January, 2008 meeting, each committee member volunteered to e-mail, call and/or visit one or more of these applicants, in order to provide current data and recommendations for committee deliberations. We are happy to report that at our April meeting we reached a well-researched and thoughtful consensus on the distribution of funding. Checks and letters were sent to the recipient organizations at the end of

April. Next fall, the cycle of Benevolence distribution will begin again. The Rummage Sale, Pizza Sale and other Benevolence activities provide funds for this important outreach from our congregation to the community. As we consider new opportunities for Benevolence--hands-on activities as well as funding--the committee and its sponsoring Mission/Outreach Ministry would like to thank all who contribute in so many ways to this worthwhile endeavor.--Lyn Page, chair, for the Benevolence Committee

2007 BENEVOLENCE RECIPIENTS

BEHIV	\$2500
Childcare Network of Evanston	\$2500
Good New Partners	\$2000
Community Renewal Society	\$1500
Infant Welfare Society	\$1500
Interfaith Action	\$1500
C.A.R.E.	\$1000
Childcare Center of Evanston	\$1000
Evanston Day Nursery	\$1000
Fundacion Supremos	\$1000
Meals at Home	\$1000
YOU	\$1000
YWCA	\$1000

THE FUN RAISER PIZZA SALE

We sold 136 pizzas making \$680.00 with \$76.00 in donations to total \$756.00. Those who sold the most pizzas are: Emma Lehman selling 36, Isabella Ogbolumani selling 16, Betty Phillips 10 pizza and Nancy Anderson selling 8! Thank you to all who participated. Remember to pick up your pizzas on May 4th, after worship.

PLEASE VOLUNTEER FOR HILDA'S PLACE!

On the first Saturday night of each month, our church is responsible for providing dinner for the 30 or so residents of Hilda's Place, a homeless shelter located in the basement of the Lake Street Church. This is a rewarding and fun activity, and much appreciated by the residents. It's a great service opportunity for a family or two or three people who might like to work together.

MANY THANKS to those who have cooked and served in the past several months (if I have inadvertently omitted your name, I apologize):

October: Joan and Tom Lindsey, Sheran Fiedler
 November: The Page family
 December: Andy Plaszc and Sharyn Julcher
 January: The Sprague family
 February: Laima Day and Chris Panek
 March: The Clifton family
 April: The Steele family

MEMBERSHIP

NEWS FROM THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Pastoral care has been a topic of great interest for the Membership Committee this spring. Rev. Denoon gave usher and greeter training to all interested church members in April, Patty Sprague and Merna Johnson worked on organizing the Sunday morning coffee hour, and Barb Lee graciously took on the job of altar flower coordinator. Thank you, Barb! Much discussion occurred regarding our pastoral care and hospitality responsibilities; much has been accomplished and much is left to do.

May affords all of us the opportunity to increase our commitment to one another through acts of kindness and outreach. Wearing our name badge is one way in which we can demonstrate hospitality to visitors and help Rev. Denoon learn our names. He would love it if members and visitors would wear name badges on Sunday mornings. This is a small act that can have enormous positive impact; please remember to wear your badge. If you forget to remove your nametag, you can leave it in a basket in fellowship hall. If your badge has disappeared, please contact Sheran Fiedler and she will make sure a new one is made for you! (fiedlers@sbcglobal.net)

The membership committee is always in need of people who are willing to visit the sick or the homebound and this year is no exception. Approximately six members have indicated on time and talent surveys that they can help with this vital act of pastoral care and we are so grateful! If you can visit a homebound member on a monthly basis, that would be wonderful gift of caring. If you can visit someone only once or twice a year, however, this too is also a gift of love that will

be *most* appreciated. Please indicate your willingness to help with visitations on the volunteer sign-up sheets found in the narthex.

Reminder: please keep Sunday morning, June 15, open on your calendar! A reception to honor our wonderful Sunday school teachers and talented choir members is being planned for the coffee hour. Countless hours have been spent helping our youth learn about Christ and our faith and in leading worship through the gift of music. Please watch the bulletin for further information regarding this reception. Let's all say "Thank You" to these dedicated volunteers who give of their time and talents at First Congregational Church.

HIPAA RULES, AND KEEPING CONFIDENCES

In 1999 Congress passed the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Three years later, the Civil Rights Office of the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) authorized a set of strict rules for hospitals and other health institutions, designed to protect the privacy of patients and the liability of health care workers.

There was an immediate impact felt in churches across the country. Many hospitals had a standing policy of contacting church offices with information about members who had been admitted. That practice ceased with HIPAA. So, if you are going to be in the hospital for an extended time, please let the church office know. The pastor will be happy to call on you.

If you know of someone who is in the hospital, and you think that the church should know, please (first) be sure to check with the individual to make sure they would like a visit in person, and (next) let Pastor Dave know.

Even if you are pretty certain the person would consent, it is wise to get their OK.

NEW PHOTO DIRECTORY COMING THIS FALL!

New members... a new minister... growing children... and a desire to put names to those unfamiliar faces in the pews... No doubt about it, it's time for a new church photo directory!

Were you and your family included in the 2003 edition of the FCCE photo directory? Then you know how valuable this resource can be to help people connect within the church. This fall, we'll be doing it again! Our church has made arrangements with Olan Mills, the folks who prepared our last photo book, to come to our church again this fall and photograph our congregation for a new edition of our church photo directory. Along with the traditional "hard copy" book, this company now also offers an online photo directory that can be linked directly to our church website.

We've tentatively scheduled Monday, October 20th and Tuesday, October 21st for "principle photography", so mark your calendars! More information will be coming soon.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- 1 Luke Perkins
- 2 Jackie Chill
- 4 Brittany Barran
- 5 Kingsley Day
- 7 Pam Daniels
- 8 LaRae Ackerson
- 10 Tom Ferguson
- 10 Charles Krause
- 12 Paul Lawless
- 14 Mary Ellen Buell
- 17 Emma Lehman
- 18 Claire McFadden
- 19 Kelly Rorke
- 20 Lacey Ogbolumani
- 21 Garrett Fonda
- 24 Sandy Whiteley
- 25 Adam Doty
- 30 Emily Connors
- 30 Polly Hawkins
- 31 Franklin Snyder

THE NEW SENIOR CLUB

On the 7th of April there were nine seniors having fun in the Guild Room, enjoying lunch and telling stories of the favorite home they had inhabited in the past. It wasn't the architecture they remembered but the family and personal activities they engaged in during those years. Because the conversation was so purposeful and such fun we never even missed the dessert which never showed up that day. Some memories were of childhood, some of newlyweds, others of raising children and longer periods but all were fond. Come join on the 5th of May when we meet again, as we have monthly for more than six years, to chew and chat at noon.

STEWARDSHIP

PARSONAGE FUND CHALLENGE

We have received a matching grant of \$40,000 from an anonymous donor to endow a Parsonage Fund that will enable the Church to assist with the housing needs of our ministerial staff today and for future times. We are being challenged to match this gift to create a Parsonage Fund, with initial funding of \$80,000, to be used to support our new senior minister with a non-interest loan that will allow him and his family to make an adequate down payment on a home in the Evanston area. This Fund will also provide support to the ministers who will lead future generations of our Church Community.

The Church Ministry Council has accepted this challenge as an opportunity for us to strengthen the foundation of the First Congregational Church by investing in its present and its future. Please join in helping us reach this goal quickly so that funds can be available to Rev. Dave Denoon and his family in a timely manner. You should have received a pledge card in the mail that can be returned to the Church, or if you'd prefer to discuss your contribution with the Council moderator, Joe Page, or Challenge Committee Chair, Betty Phillips, please do not hesitate to contact them. Joe Page-847/475-3943; Betty Phillips - 847/256-0245

MAJOR ADDRESS ON STEWARDSHIP COMES WITH PASTOR'S "O&A" TALK

Pastor Dave Denoon had a bit of a surprise in store for Moderator Joe Page and the church members present for the Quarterly Congregational Meeting, April 27.

After a marvelous, spirited worship service led by the Sunday School, with a visionary sermon by Youth Director Jens Notstad, adult members and some Confirmation students sat down in the Sanctuary for discussion about (1) an initiative to create a new restricted endowment for down payment assistance for the new Senior Minister's home and for future clergy residences, and (2) a rescheduling of our Sunday mornings, beginning this July (9 a.m. for an all-ages Sunday School; 10 a.m. for worship).

Next on the agenda was "an update on our ongoing Open and Affirming conversation." Joe asked Pastor Dave to offer some insights on the situation, and the Senior Minister delivered more than just some thoughts, but a comprehensive address on how becoming Open and Affirming must affect everything that we do at First – Evanston, including handling budget concerns. For a portion of his talk, Pastor Dave observed that becoming "O&A" can offer us a leg up in the community, if we make it truly effective and comprehensive:

I have to advise all of you that our present goal for creating a community Open to and Affirming of all persons is probably sufficiently visionary, to establish who and how we ought to be. To be able to say and show that

We are open and affirming to people of all ages and abilities, races, sexual orientations and national origins.

we will be opening our collective eyes to those who are in need in our community – in need of financial assistance, yes, but also of spiritual connection and wholeness of life.

Many have noted that the O&A statement at the beginning of our worship order has been set aside. I did this, around Eastertime, because of space limitations, but also because I had heard passionately from various quarters that the statement had repeatedly exceeded our ability so far, as far as actually accomplishing it was concerned. Some have actually walked away

from our church, because of their disappointment with our inability to live up to our words. The statement is an admirable goal which I whole-heartedly endorse, but we have a lot of work to do.

The Senior Minister then advised the congregation that we have to get moving, if we are going to accomplish the goal of a wide welcome that the O&A statement sets for us. A sizable number of the congregation will want and need to engage in **Diversity Training... [as well as sensitizing] ourselves to the needs around and among us, to recognize the signs of abuse or other mistreatment, and our attention to the delicate balance between community concern and others' privacy... [to use in worship] inclusive language in reference to the Godhead and humanity... to create to the best of our ability, when we are together at least of a Sunday, the beloved community who represent the kingdom of God or – if I am to follow through on my own promise to use inclusive language – the realm of heaven!**

As regards our financial stewardship and the present condition in which the church budget finds itself, the process and goal of becoming O&A would likely generate an atmosphere of thankfulness among members, friends, and guests on Sunday mornings and other times, to such an extent that our financial stewardship would change, **“not just upon reaching our destination but all along the journey.”** People would be motivated **“to begin considering your offerings to the church as part of your praise of God,”** rather than mere charitable contributions:

Does what you give as your regular offering express, or even begin to express, your devotion to God? Does it give tribute to the glory you have experienced in your life? Are you saying “Thanks” or simply “Here take it”? And if the latter, what will be required for you to move to the former?

Text of Pastor Dave Denoon's address to the congregation can be found online at the First Congregational Church website,
<http://www.FirstChurchEvanston.org>

COFFEE HOUR VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

That warm cup of coffee and little sweet after worship service is such a nice thing--gets people talking, gives us a chance to catch up. It's so easy and so appreciated. Please contact Patty Sprague at 847-475-4104 or patty_sprague@yahoo.com with a Sunday date you can help out.



Don't worry--we'll remind you the week before your sign-up date. We have the coffee and serving supplies, you just bring the half'n'half and the goodies, get the fixin's perking and set up, and rinse out the pot when the party's over. We so appreciate your help! Please do help. Thanks so much.

Thanks to the following people who have signed up:

May 4	Sandy Whiteley
May 11	Bernice Valantinas
May 18	Ann Trompeter and Paul Janicki
May 25	Jean Herbert
June 1	
June 8	
June 15	Laura Wilson/Membership Committee
June 22	Barb Ferguson
June 29	Peggy and Otto Tinzmann
July 6	Andy Nelson
July 13	Betty Phillips



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**OFFICE HOURS AND EMAIL
ADDRESSES FOR THE STAFF**

Pastor David Denoon

Monday – Thursday 9 am to 4 pm
ddenoon@firstchurchevanston.org

David Lornson

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 10 am to 4 pm
dlornson@firstchurchevanston.org

Deb Shamlin

Tuesday, Friday 9 am to 4 pm
dshamlin@firstchurchevanston.org

Melia Pappas

Monday – Friday 8:30 am to 4 pm
mpappas@firstchurchevanston.org

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