



FROM THE PASTOR

"TOWARD A QUARTERLY MEETING, JUNE 29"

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul... with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them... (Acts 4:32a, 33–34a)

One of the first questions I was asked immediately after I arrived on the scene here was, "What plans do you have for us?" I soon learned that this question usually meant, "What changes do you have in store for us?" Some asked this with caution, others with gusto.

People in leadership, especially, wanted to know what adjustments to our life together I intended to make. I found myself spending hours at a time in meetings with people who have been troubled over the future of the church. We talked, and prayed for discernment.

Sometimes we were talking about the Church in the 21st Century, sometimes we were talking about First Congregational at the present time. I told them, though I think that getting out the Good News in a credible fashion is the challenge for The Church generally nowadays, I frankly hadn't had enough time when the questions were put to me, to be able to diagnose with any sense of competency the issues at hand, here.

I have now spent four pretty intense months here. I have come to understand fully the gravity of your questions, and I think I have gained a pretty good sense of what our prevailing issues are. Further, I'm satisfied that I have a handle on what their solutions might be.

Put very briefly, simply, and bluntly, the major challenge for First Church is for us to establish strong community focused on Christ and centered in the Spirit, or (more precisely) we need to establish a commonality amongst ourselves. This would not be a common expression of what our religion is; we are a Congregational church, after

all. It would instead be a strong sense of what and Who we share, bringing us together.

Just about every issue we are experiencing – from a precariously unbalanced budget, to attendance that has been low, to a weariness over efforts that have seemed fruitless – is in some way attributable to a measure of disconnectedness among us with regard to this. Even when we have tried to connect according to affinity or common interests, we have accidentally found our groups themselves isolated from each other.

Sunday mornings have offered the clearest demonstration of what I am describing:

- With Sunday School and worship at the same time, we have been disassociating according to age.
- Though the Council last year adopted a positive statement about our intention to embrace and uplift all who desire to be part of our community, the decision to adopt it was made with the assumption that the Open & Affirming Statement could be a means to a goal, rather than only the goal itself. As a result, there were some vivid examples of people attracted to our Sunday assembly who experienced a significant disconnect between the Statement and its implementation in the congregation generally.
- When worship leaders and I have sought to create a richer experience on Sunday mornings, mindful of the broadness we are seeking for ourselves, we have also found services lasting longer, thus depriving

members of sufficient time for fellowship afterward. Choir members and others with plans for the day have had to leave without being able to share fellowship.

Not only Sundays are at issue either. Reaching out and inviting, or simply cultivating community, has ended up at odds with building preservation and day-to-day expenses. It has been tempting to blame finance officers for our problems, but directives the congregation has adopted have offered them few choices about how to conduct business.

We can ill afford this dilemma. It is time to change the mood and atmosphere. It is time to adopt a long-range plan for our congregation, to develop new and renewing ministries based on our community values of Spirit-centeredness and inclusion.

The sooner we meet about this, the better.

We have had a Quarterly Congregational Meeting on the schedule for July 20. I have spoken with staff and Moderator Joe Page about moving that meeting to June 29, after worship, and we are all in agreement.

In the sermons on June 22, and on June 29, I will offer some indications of the direction in which I think we can go as a people of God. Then, at the Congregational Meeting, I will be presenting the goals and details of a long-range plan that I will have discussed and improved through consultation with the Ministry Council and the staff.

Please be praying for me, the staff and Council, and for our church, as together we prepare to discern and engage fully the Holy Spirit's direction for us toward a new day.

With confidence in God's grace to lead us where we ought to be,

I bid you peace!
Pastor Dave Denoon

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 - should 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. **Thanks to all who have contributed. To date, we have raised \$3565 toward the repairs!**

ROBINSON RECITAL ON SUNDAY, JUNE 22



Mark your calendar! Three musical members of the congregation--violinist Megan Bauer, cellist Jane Soung, and pianist Kingsley Day — join forces at 3 p.m. on Sunday, June 22, for a program on our Robinson Recital Series in the Guild Room of the Church House. The recital includes Mendelssohn's popular Trio in D Minor, one of the great masterpieces of the piano trio literature, as well as several violin-piano and cello-piano favorites —Massenet's Meditation from Thais and Fauré's Elegie, Sicilienne, and Berceuse.

The three performers hold degrees from some of the nation's most prestigious music schools. Megan is a graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music; Jane is a graduate of Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. Kingsley holds a bachelor's degree from Lawrence University and a master's from the Eastman School of Music.

Admission is by freewill donation (\$10 donation per person is suggested). A reception will follow. Don't miss this delightful hour of music in the intimate surroundings of the Guild Room.

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 SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL JULY 13 THROUGH AUGUST 31

In July we are starting something new! I hope you, your family and friends will plan to join us. Our Sunday mornings have a new beginning.

On July 13th, we will begin a Sunday School class for adults, Continuing Christian Education at 9:00. ***Beyond Your Backyard*** will look at serving others- family, friends, and the wider community. Leading this class is Marcy Jenkins, former director of Adult Education at All Souls Church in New York City and a good friend of FCCE.

For those who finished the seventh grade this month, going on to eighth grade in September, ***A Hop, Skip and a Jump through the Bible***, will be taught so that confirmation can begin in the fall. All seventh graders should have received a letter from Pastor Dave inviting them to participate in this class, if you did not, please let him know- ddenoon@firstchurchevanston.org.

We are trying a new format for Vacation Bible School, spreading our learning over eight Sundays. We are ***Surfin' the Scriptures***, looking at ways to serve others. There will be Bible stories, of course, service projects, games, fun—Jens is with us and he's bringing his guitar, so we'll do some singing. **Volunteers are needed to help build our beach classroom in the dining room. Please**

contact Lacey Ogbolumani to help.
Laceyodesign@hotmail.com. Thanks!

A Cereal and Coffee bar will be available at 8:45. All classes are in the Church House and will end at 9:45. Please join us.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CALENDAR

There will be Sunday School June 1 and 8 for all classes. We will honor our Sunday School teachers in worship on June 15.

ANNUAL POOL PARTY SAVE THE DATE



The annual pool party at Centennial Park in Wilmette is August 6th. Please watch the weekly bulletin, monthly newsletter or website—isn't it great to have so many ways to find out what's going on at church—for additional information.

BANNER WORKSHOP

All those who are interested in making banners for the church, please gather in the front of the sanctuary after worship on **July 6th**.

MEMBERSHIP

"OPEN & AFFIRMING" DINNER AND DISCUSSION, JUNE 4

Join your sisters and brothers in faith, for dinner at the Church House Dining Room, June 4 at 6:00 p.m., for a meal and a free discussion of First Congregational Church's Open & Affirming process.

Supper will be lasagna, salad, and dessert; beverages also will be provided. A free-will offering to offset the cost of the meal will be collected.

All ages are encouraged to be present. To this end, child care will be provided, and a movie appropriate for our young people will be shown, once they have finished eating.

For the youth and adults present, there will be a discussion after supper about the plans of the Open & Affirming Task Force to educate and implement the O&A Statement adopted by the Ministry Council, last year. A special guest will be present, from another local church which has recently adopted such a statement, to describe that church's experience with such a process and their experiences since publicizing their own O&A Statement.

The intention of the Task Force is that this be a time when people may feel free to raise questions and express opinions, with frankness and without judgment, and to get a stronger sense of the work that lies before us. So, please come.

Reservations are helpful but not required, so that the preparers of the meal may have a sense of how many to feed. Please contact the office by phone or email, by June 3.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

We belatedly extend our sympathy to the family of Virginia France, who died April 18th.

Congratulations to choir members Gary Hardesty and Jessica Don on the birth of their baby son, Alexander. Congratulations to Andy Plaszc and Michelle McGraw who were married on May 25th.

NEW CHURCH PHOTO DIRECTORY COMING!

Save the dates of Monday, October 20 and Tuesday, the 21st! Those are the days that a photographer from Olan Mills, Inc. will be in our church to take pictures for our new church photo directory.

It's been five years since we released our last photo directory. The church has now made arrangements for a new church guide. You'll soon be seeing more information around church, in the weekly bulletin and in this newsletter about signing up for your photo sessions in October. We're looking forward to preparing a new and updated directory that will help us build community and get to know one another better!

THE NEW SENIOR CLUB

We met, twelve strong, on May 4th. We enjoyed the usual fellowship by talking generally while we ate, and then had a time to share ten (or fewer) of the most important events of our lives. It was a great way to know each other better because we heard about things we hadn't known before. Did you know...? Oh, no! That's gossip and may not be meant for everyone to know. Next month, at noon on the first Monday, we welcome idol elders to bring a sandwich and join us in the Guild Room to gab.

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES



Jay Shamlin, Charlie Krause and Julia Page on Graduation Sunday (May 18)

Best wishes to our graduating seniors:

Ross Donnan (Monmouth College)
 Charles "Charlie" Krause (University of Wisconsin – Madison)
 Julia Page (Oakton Community College)
 Jehu Shamlin (to the music conservatory of Baldwin-Wallace University)
 Eliza Sprague (the international program of Long Island University).

CHANCEL FLOWER UPDATE

Thank you to Barb Lee for volunteering to coordinate chancel flower donations.

Donating chancel flowers is a wonderful way to honor someone special in your life, commemorate a special occasion (perhaps a birthday or anniversary), to say thank you, or to honor the memory of a friend or family member. The chancel flowers sit on the communion table in the chancel. The flowers cost \$40. Donations are acknowledged in the Sunday bulletin.

If you would like to donate flowers, please contact Barb Lee at (847) 251-0007 or babslee@aol.com to reserve your Sunday.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- | | |
|----|-------------------|
| 3 | Mallen Clifton |
| 3 | Eliza Sprague |
| 4 | Chloe Kingsbury |
| 4 | Kathy Vissman |
| 5 | Jan Korsvik |
| 6 | John Betts |
| 7 | Betsy Lane |
| 8 | Geoffrey Cubbage |
| 8 | Eleanor Hardesty |
| 8 | Roger Lehman |
| 8 | Emily Menco |
| 8 | Patty Sprague |
| 10 | Hayley Chill |
| 11 | Nicholas Tucker |
| 14 | Ben Wilson |
| 16 | Charlotte Cubbage |
| 16 | Jeffrey Roseberry |
| 19 | Laurie Brown |
| 19 | Robert Grant |
| 19 | Lucy Kingsbury |
| 21 | Jane Koestring |
| 22 | Evan McKenna |
| 23 | John Goode |
| 23 | Joseph Page |
| 24 | John Lane |
| 25 | Chad Kingsbury |
| 27 | Martha Beckwith |
| 27 | Donald Hohman |

OUTREACH

BENEVOLENCE

Last month, the Benevolence Committee was happy to announce the awarding of benevolence funds from our congregation to thirteen recipient organizations. The checks were sent in late April, and the letters of thanks have been arriving almost daily.

Eric Nelson, Executive Director of **BEHIV**-- Better Existence with HIV, writes: *“On behalf of the Board, staff, and most importantly, the clients we serve, thank you for First Congregational Church of Evanston's generous donation to BEHIV. Your gift will be applied toward our critically needed HIV Prevention programs, which include free, confidential HIV and Hepatitis C testing; risk-reduction management; prevention case management, and our Education Outreach program . . . Your support allows us to strengthen BEHIV's mission to stop the spread of HIV while providing unique and effective services through culturally competent, peer-based programming.”*

Nora Rucker, Executive Director of the **Evanston Day Nursery Association**, writes, *“The grant we received will help to fund our tutoring program ‘Students Helping Students.’ The funds will continue to be used to bridge college students with the students enrolled in Evanston Day Nursery's after-school program for homework assistance and tutoring. For the past three years of the program, no children have been retained in school . . . Evanston Day Nursery has been serving an economically diverse population of children and families since 1912. Through the generous support of First Congregational Church of Evanston, we can continue our work providing young children with the highest quality care, and education and support services to their families.”*

These letters are typical of the gratitude expressed by the important programs your benevolence funds are helping to support.

Thanks to all who work on the Rummage Sale, the Pizza Sale, the Mission/Outreach Ministry and the Benevolence Committee, as well as others who contribute toward providing and distributing our benevolence gifts.

Together, we make our beliefs a reality, as these donations carry the message of hope and caring from our church community to the wider community around us.

CHURCH OFFICE SUMMER HOURS

Beginning Monday, June 23 through Monday, September 1 the staff will observe summer hours. **The church office will be open Monday – Thursday, 9:00 to 3:00**

and Friday 9:00 to noon.

OFFICE HOURS AND EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR THE STAFF**Pastor David Denoon**

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

David Lornson

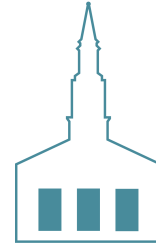
Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 10 am to 4 pm
dlornson@firstchurchevanston.org

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

**Sanctuary Address**

1445 Hinman Avenue (at Grove Street)

Mailing Address

1417 Hinman Avenue
Evanston, IL 60201
Tel: 847-864-8332
Fax: 847-864-2143

Email

info@firstchurchevanston.org

Website

www.firstchurchevanston.org

**First Congregational Church of
Evanston
1417 Hinman Avenue
Evanston, Illinois 60201**

Quarterly Congregational Meeting

June 29

Immediately following worship