

# The Herald

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



December 2008

Pastor: Katherine Bryant Graves

## CONTENT

### Page 2 Disciples Perspective

- Wed. Ministry

### Page 3 Areas of Service

- Congregational Meeting

### Page 4 Areas of Service

- Outreach
- Coffee Hour
- Thank You

### Page 5 Children's Education

### Page 6 Celebration Dates

### Page 7 Calendar

## Alternative Gift Fair

Sunday, December 7th, 2008 from 2 pm to 5 pm at the Civic Center.

## 14th Annual Cookie Walk

The fourteenth annual Cookie Walk at First Christian will be Saturday, December 13, from 9 to 12, in the Fellowship Hall. All church ladies (and gentlemen, too!) are asked to bake one or more batches of your best holiday goodies and bring them to the church on Friday, December 14. Anyone who has no time to bake but would like to support the event is encouraged to make a cash donation. Just indicate that your donation is for the Cookie Walk.

A few helpers are needed to set up late afternoon on Friday, December 12, and for the event on Saturday December 13 (to set up starting at 8:00, during the Walk from 9 to 12, or cleaning up from 12 to 1). Sign-up sheets will be available in the narthex, or you may contact Martha Ellert.

Anyone wishing to order gingerbread should fill out an order form or contact Vera Felts, as soon as possible. Order forms for gingerbread will be available at the church on November 30 and December 7, and all orders should be placed no later than December 7. Gingerbread cookies will be \$4.50 each, \$5.00 if personalized.



## Lights Fantastic Parade

Mark your calendars- Saturday, December 6th, is the Lights Fantastic Parade. We will need volunteers and help for this event. The last two years have been very successful. This years theme is a scene from church. We will have Stain Glass windows on the outside of the float with a lighted Christmas tree and singers on the inside.



“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times; it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness; it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity; it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness; . . . ”

- Charles Dickens from the Tale of Two Cities, 1859.

This is the season we become more familiar with Dickens from the magical tale of a Christmas Carol rather than the darker story of the French revolution. Yet, as I listen to the many stories of this particular Christmas season, I am reminded of these famous lines from the social activist, Charles Dickens.

Our Annual Congregational Meeting was the best of times but at a moment in our history when we fear we may be facing the worst of times. We have so much for which to be grateful and so many to whom we owe our gratitude. We are able to meet our overhead because of the generosity of our members past and present. Yet, we also realize shifts in culture and economic downtrends are changing the map of American culture and the church in every place is faced with some very challenging realities and we at FCC are no exception. It may seem a cruel irony but as costs rise, and the stock market plummets participation continues to decline in American congregations. Long established churches are closing their doors. Our supportive institutions like our colleges, seminaries and regional ministries are facing similar challenges. It seems we can no longer afford to take our Christianity, denominational or congregational life for granted.

And although shrinking populations and revenue's may seem the worst of times, perhaps there is opportunity as well. It may well be the best of times to be reshaped and reborn as we struggle out of the mold of culture's expectations and turn to the wisdom of God who might say to us, "That is fine for them but YOU are different – you have a unique story and a particular identity. Be true to whose you are."

Recently, one congregation provided an alternative to "Black Friday" so people could spend a day celebrating the meaning and purpose of the Christ in Christmas rather than just spending at the mall. There were opportunities at church for fellowship, study and worship as well as service projects in the community and of course there was abundant hospitality. This church made such a radical statement with this program, they made the news! Imagine that! How radical is our proclamation? How will lives be transformed this Christmas by our story? For unto US a Child is born!

## Wednesday Night



First is a photograph of Richard "Pete" Peterson and his wife Anita. "Pete" Peterson spoke at the Wednesday Supper November 19th. His stories about ethnic divisions of Pittsburgh, Pa during in the 1950 and how it coincided with the integration of Pittsburgh Pirate baseball were very interesting. He left a good deal of time in the presentation to answer questions about his writings about baseball and his own recollections of the period. "Pete" is well known for his NPR feature titled "Reading Baseball" and having edited many books about baseball. Search his name Richard "Pete" Peterson on Amazon.com to see some of his titles.

## Congregational Meeting November 16, 2008

On Sunday, November 16, 2008, after the Thanksgiving Potluck, the congregation met for its annual Congregational Meeting. Al Parr, representing the Nominating Committee, presented the nominations for Trustee, Elders, and Deacons. Greg Whitledge, Facilities and Finance Avenue of Serve Leader, presented the 2009 General Operating Budget and Dia Parr, Board Chair presented a Memorandum of Understanding to the Minister's Contract for consideration. After the presentations, the congregation voted on each item by secret ballot. Jak Tichenor and Oval and Joyce Myers collected and counted the ballots.

### The following people were elected to serve First Christian Church from 2009 to 2011.

#### Trustee

#### Deacons

Tim Damian  
Jason Arnold

Alan Benson

#### Elders

Johnna Moutell  
Vera Felts  
Joel Thoman  
Tom Kilpatrick  
Teresa Ullman  
Gayle Pesavento  
Monica Tichenor

**A General Operating Budget for 2009** of \$162,385.00 was approved. This budget reflects a 3.3% increase over last year's budget. The budget is to be funded as follows:

#### Pledges

\$92,934.00

#### Unpledged Offering

\$8,000.00

#### Interest Income from

#### Old National Bank

\$1,000.00

#### Transfer from the Garden

#### Fund

\$500.00

#### Transfer from the

#### Managed Fund

\$51,951.00

Because of the tight financial situation the congregation faces, no raises were offered to the personnel the congregation employees. Most of the increase in the budget is due to rising costs of utilities.

Personnel were instead given extra paid time away from the job. Marleen Shepherd and Mary Burnam were given four (4) personal days, one (1) per quarter. Derek Hamblin was given one (1) more emergency paid Sunday.

### The following Memorandum of Understanding to the Minister's contract was also approved:

1. Vacation time will be increased to twenty-five (25) days (five (5) weeks) per calendar year until such time as either party requests a change. Vacation time cannot accumulate from year to year. Although not required, it is suggested that one (1) vacation day be used per quarter for personal reflection time.
2. Eight (8) days of sick leave will be granted per calendar

year. Sick leave may be used at such time there is a need for doctor's appointments, personal illness, or illness in the immediate family. Immediate family includes spouse, children, grandchildren, or parents and parents-in-law. If more than eight (8) days of sick leave is needed for an extended illness, vacation time will be used.

3. As is current practice, Continuing Education released time will be one (1) week (5 days) per year. For time needed for Continuing Education beyond one (1) week, vacation time will be used.
4. For tax purposes, three thousand dollars (\$3000.00) will be moved from salary to housing allowance upon recommendation from the accountant.

Marleen Shepherd and Katherine Graves then recognized members of the congregation who have contributed time and energy to the life of the church in the past year. Marleen awarded certificates to Debra Whitledge, Stephanie Graves and David Schremp, and Brice and Amy Dion for their work in Christian Education. Katherine Graves awarded certificates to Marcia Phelps, outgoing Trustee; Grace Hussey, Dia Parr, Jak Tichenor, and Tamara Workman, outgoing Elders; and Kathy Deutsch, Stephanie Graves, Ron Graves, Tom Kilpatrick, and Monica Tichenor, outgoing Deacons.

## Outreach

Greetings First Christian!

Ever so quietly, Advent has arrived!  
Rejoice my church, this Christmastide!  
The birth of our Savior, the light of the world,  
Drawing us together as no other event could.

Filled with the hope of a season, as nature lays herself bare,  
We seek each other's warmth, compassion, and care.  
Celebrating, we stand together as one.  
Reflecting, Giving, as we await our Jesus to come.

Please consider the events listed below, as a way to celebrate and share with others the wonder of this season.

Many volunteers will be needed to make these events successful. Please consider helping if you can.

- December 6<sup>th</sup>: Lights Fantastic Parade and Open House at FCC
- December 13<sup>th</sup>: Cookie Walk
- December 14<sup>th</sup>: Advent Dinner and Children's play, 5 p.m.
- December 21<sup>st</sup>: Christmas Choral Worship service, 10:30 a.m.
- December 24<sup>th</sup>: Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship-7 p.m.

Blessings~Debra Whitledge

## Coffee Hour Sponsors Needed

Coffee Hour Sponsors Needed  
The church is looking for sponsors of the coffee hour on Sunday mornings which are currently being held before worship but will be returning to the after worship time beginning on Jan. 4, 2009. If you would like to contribute and be a sponsor of the coffee hour, you may make out a check for \$25 and give that to Katherine to reimburse the church. If you would like to be a sponsor of a coffee hour for a specific date and do a different menu, please let Katherine know which date you would like. As a sponsor of that particular date and time, you would be responsible for the set-up and clean-up.

The church is currently acting as the sponsor for our weekly coffee hours. We have a standing order at Panera's and Katherine picks up the order as she comes to the church. Sandy sees that the bagels & cream cheese, coffee & juice are put out & also does the clean-up of the items afterwards.

My family and I want to thank everyone for their kind and caring remembrances of our sister and aunt, Dorothy L. Sprehe. We thank Pastor Katherine Graves and Reverend John Annabel for the wonderful service.

Dorothy and I have not only been sisters but the very best of friends. We shall miss her but she is how in God's beautiful hands.

Thank you again for all your love. God Bless.

Lovingly, Anita Sprehe Lenzini and families





## **Advent Dinner and**

**Christmas Play** Sunday, Dec. 14  
Children participating in the Advent Play should plan to be at church on Sunday, Dec. 14 during worship for our dress rehearsal for the performance that evening at 5 p.m., which will be followed by the Advent Dinner. Then we will welcome a special visitor who will bring gifts for the children. **We would like to have gifts for all children present at the dinner, so please let me know if your children plan to be there.**

The children will be performing the reader's theater, "The Customs of Christmastide," which tells where we get some of our most beloved Christmas traditions such as the Christmas tree and exchanging Christmas cards and gifts. The production includes the singing of familiar Christmas hymns.

## **Sunday School Time Change**

**Starting Sunday, January 6, we will hold Sunday School from 10:15-11:15 a.m.** and then join in worship. I know it's confusing to change times again, and I apologize. We have been trying to ensure that Young Disciples have both Sunday School and worship time on a regular basis. Parents have let me know that the early start time we began this fall is not working for them, and we've seen a decline in attendance to Sunday School. Hopefully this new time will work better.

## **Adult Education**

We are no longer offering adult education classes on Sunday morning due to lack of attendance. We may try another time, and I will let you know. In the meantime, adult study and conversation

continues on Tuesday nights with "Tools for Bible Study," and following dinner on Wednesdays.

## **December Sunday School**

Throughout November, children learned some of Jesus' most important teachings in Matthew, including the Golden Rule, the Beatitudes, the Parable of the 10 Bridesmaids and the Parable of the Talents. In December children will hear the Christmas story through the scriptures of Isaiah, Luke and Matthew, exploring themes such as Messengers of Hope, Birthing a Promise, Long-Awaited Gift & Another Road. Check the FCC Weekly each week to see what we're up to each Sunday.

In December, we will begin collecting offering during Sunday School to benefit Heifer International. Our goal will be to raise \$50 that will allow us to give a Basket of Hope. The Heifer Hope Basket includes chickens and rabbits. Rabbits are easy to care for and reproduce quickly, allowing their owners to sell the offspring for extra income, and chickens lay eggs and provide manure for vegetable gardens. That's why this gift of hope goes on and on, lasting much longer and helping more families than a usual gift basket could.

Each Sunday, the children will spend some time in the classroom learning about Heifer and how their gifts will truly benefit others. Please encourage your children to bring their change to Sunday School for this project. Check out [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org) to learn more about this wonderful organization.

## **Youth Group**

Youth Group continues to meet regularly here from 5 to 7 p.m. Sundays with Stephanie Graves and David Schremp. Twelves & teens and friends are most welcome to join us at First Christian each week for faith and fun.

In Christian Love,  
Marleen Shepherd  
Christian Education Coordinator

## **Important Dates**

### **Saturday, December 6**

Lights Fantastic Parade and open house at FCC. Come join us for cookies & cocoa after the parade!

### **Sunday, December 14**

Advent Dinner and Christmas Play at 5 p.m.

### **Sunday, December 21**

Christmas Sunday  
Choral Christmas Service

### **Wednesday, December 24**

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

### **Sunday, January 6**

Sunday School begins at 10:15 a.m. and continues throughout spring at this time.

## *First Christian Church December Birthdays and Anniversaries*

### Birthdays

12/4 - Andrea Schmulbach  
12/4 - Greg Maddox  
12/4 - Tom North  
12/8 - John Nance  
12/8 - Carrie Barthelme  
12/9 - Katie Legan  
12/13 - John Klein  
12/16 - Maya Kayne  
12/17 - Sandy Lowell  
12/19 - Les Miller  
12/20 - Katherine Graves  
12/21 - Vera Felts

12/21 - Lila Hall  
12/21 - Reon Chancey  
12/29 - Peggy Stockdale  
12/29 - Nancy Mallet  
12/31 - Tristen Ellis

### Anniversaries

12/12 - Michael & Amanda Eddings  
12/18 - Richard & Chris Klein  
12/26 - Ron & Katherine Graves  
12/31 - Stephanie Graves & David Schremp



## Contacts

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**Children's Ed. Marleen Shepherd**  
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**Marge Schulhof, Parish Nurse**  
fcparishnurse@aol.com

**Derek Hamblin, Music Min. Dir.**  
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**Board Chair**  
**Dia Parr**  
dialparr2@mac.com

**Vice Chair**  
Jak Tichenor

**Congregational Care**  
Sandy Lowell

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**Facility & Finance**  
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## December 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Office Closed Pastor's Sabbath	2	3 11-1 Staff Meeting 5:3p Soup for the Soul 6p Table Talk 6:45p Choir	4	5	6 Lights Fantastic Parade Open House
7 8:3a Elder's Meeting 10:3a Bible Presentation during Worship	8 Office Closed Pastor's Sabbath	9	10 11-1 Staff Meeting 4:3p Knitting 5:3p Supper 6p Table Talk 6:45p Choir	11 10:3-Noon Morning Etude Club Concert and Potluck Luncheon	12	13 Cookie Walk
14 5p Advent Dinner and Program 5p Children's Program	15 Office Closed Pastor's Sabbath	16	17 11-1 Staff meeting 5:3p Supper 6p Table Talk No Choir	18 6p-9p Girl Scout Leader's Meeting	19	20
21 10:3a Christmas Choral Program	22 Office Closed Pastor's Sabbath	23	24 7p Christmas Eve Service 	25  Merry Christmas!	26 Office closed	27
28	29 Office Closed Pastor's Sabbath	30 Office closed	31 New Year's Eve Office closed	Elder of the Month: TBA Deacon of the Month: TBA Worship Coordinator: Grace Hussey		