

First Congregational Church, UCC

2201 7th Avenue, Moline, IL 61265 * 309.762.0787

* All Members, Ministers * Rev. Allen Mothershed, Senior Pastor

* Rev. Jacqueline Perry, Associate Pastor

Saturday Worship 5:30p.m., Lower Level

Sunday Worship 9:00a.m. & 11:00a.m.

Fellowship Hour 10:00a.m., Café

Children's Worship, following the

Church School Hour 10:00a.m.

Early Word at 9:00a.m. Worship

December 16, 2009

Special Seasonal Worship Services December 2009 and January 2010

Longest Night, December 21, 4:00p.m. - 4:45p.m.

Near the darkest and shortest day of the year we celebrate the birth of Christ, our light. This year, the shortest day is Monday, December 21. Please join us for a reflective worship service in the sanctuary, focusing on finding light in places of darkness. For those experiencing loss, challenges, or who wish to seek the light in holiday busyness.

Christmas Eve, December 24

Invite your family and friends to join us this Christmas Eve, and celebrate the birth of our Savior.

5:00p.m. Youth-led worship with children's and youth choirs, congregational carol singing, and a costumed nativity tableau. This year we will be collecting hats, mittens, and scarves to be distributed to area schools and preschools. You may bring them to the service, or to Heidi's office.

7:00p.m. Reflective candlelight service featuring traditional Christmas scripture readings and contemporary meditations. Campanella Ringers will add Christmas handbell selections.

11:00p.m. Be seated early for congregational carol singing begins at 10:45 p.m.

Chancel Choir sings "I Hear the Prophet Callin"--a Christmas cantata by Pepper Choplin, accompanied by chamber orchestra.

New Year's Eve, December 31, 5:00p.m.

A New Year's Eve Worship Service to be held at Community of Christ Church, 1525 48th Street Place, Moline. This service is sponsored by the Moline Ministerial Association.

Christian Unity Service, January 24, 2010, 4:00p.m.

An ecumenical worship service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity hosted by First Congregational Church. Unity choir with guest preacher, Rev. Phil Hart.

Christmas Devotion

Reflections of a Christmas Faith

On the Eve of Christmas hatred will vanish.

On the Eve of Christmas the earth will flourish.

On the Eve of Christmas war will be gone.

On the Eve of Christmas Love will be born.

When we offer a glass of water to a thirsty person
it is Christmas.

When we clothe a naked person with a gown of love
it is Christmas.

When we wipe the tears from weeping eyes
it is Christmas.

When the spirit of revenge dies in us
it is Christmas.

When in our hearts we no longer want to stay apart
it is Christmas.

When we are buried in the being of God
it is Christmas.

(source: the Sabeel Liberation Theology Centre, Jerusalem)

May the joy, peace, and love of Christ be born in each of you and in your families
as we celebrate the birth of our Lord. Merry Christmas from your staff.

Pastor Allen, Pastor Jackie, Heidi, Chloe, Gail, Shannon, Sara, Coral, Paul, Kathy, & Harley

May you have a Merry Christmas & a Blessed New Year!

Worship & Education

Wednesday Morning Bible Study

Morning Bible Study meets Wednesday from 10:00a.m. - 11:00a.m. in the Colonial Parlor. **Pastor Jackie** provides a session handout that day. All are welcome. If participants will read the scripture ahead of time their study will be enhanced, but it is not required. Bring your Bible (multiple versions welcome). The study is designed for those who are able to pop in as their schedule will allow, as well as those who seek study as part of a weekly discipline. Lunch after is optional. All are welcome!

Dec. 23 Dec. 30 Jan. 6	NO BIBLE STUDY
Jan. 13 Ordinary Time 2	Isaiah 62:1-5 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 John 2:1-11

Book Discussion Group

Meets every other Wednesday from 12:00p.m. - 1:00p.m. If you like, bring a lunch to the parlor as we discuss short stories from Listening for God, Contemporary Literature and the Life of Faith series edited by Paula J. Carlson and Peter S. Hawkins (Augsburg Fortress Press, 1994). (Note: the reprint of this version is also known as: Listening for God, Vol. I: Contemporary Literature and the Life of Faith (Reader Guide) (Vol 1) Paula J. Carlson (Author). Search www.amazon.com for used older version or new version - \$10.00 or less. All are welcome. Contact **Pastor Jackie** for more info.

December 23 NO meeting

January 13 Chapter 7 (Keillor) & Chapter 8 (Rodriguez)

January 27 Book to be announced

Altar Flowers for 2010

Would you like to donate flowers for the altar, narthex, or fellowship table for a special occasion? In memory of someone? Because flowers are pretty? This special ministry is open to our entire congregation. The church can order them for you from Staack's Florist or you may order flowers on your own. We have many dates available. Please contact **Coral** or **Shannon** in the church office at 309.762.0787 to sign up for any given Sunday.

New E-Mail Accounts for Church and Staff Members

Effective immediately, the church and staff members have new E-mail addresses:

First Congregational Church:

fccmoline@fccmoline.org

Rev. Allen Mothershed, Senior Pastor:

allen@fccmoline.org

Rev. Jackie Perry, Associate Pastor:

jackie@fccmoline.org

Heidi Hulme, Children & Youth Ministries:

heidi@fccmoline.org

Chloë Stodt, Music Coordinator and Organist:

chloe@fccmoline.org

Shannon Gruhlke, Business Manager:

shannon@fccmoline.org

Coral Minge, Office Assistant :

coral@fccmoline.org

Sara McLees, Parish Nurse:

sara@fccmoline.org

Paul Renaud, Chancel Choir Director:

paulrenaud@aol.com

Gail Glockhoff-Long, Handbell Choir Director:

gail@qcelderlaw.com

The church will keep our old *netexpress* email addresses active for one month. Please make the change in your computer address books. We thank you for your patience during this transition.

New Phone Numbers for Pastor Allen

Pastor Allen Mothershed & his family are now using only cell phones. You can contact Pastor Allen at 563.271.9836 and **Marla Mothershed** at 563.271.5330. During office hours, except Fridays, call the church at 309.762.0787 Ext. 1.

Pledge Cards/2010 Budget Update

Thank you for the generous response so many of you have made with your pledges to the church for 2010. To date we have received 217 pledges totaling \$396,359.86. We are hoping for at least last year's pledged amount, which was \$458,106. The Budget Committee will be meeting November 19 to take a look at what each board/committee proposed for 2010. We ask that if you have not yet made your pledge, please prayerfully consider what gifts you are able to give to the church for this next year. You have until December 31 to turn in your pledge card. Remember: pledges DO NOT automatically renew.

Worship Times: Sunday 9:00a.m. & 11:00a.m. ~ Saturday 5:30p.m.

Youth Group Calendar

- December 18** - Night Out in the Cold 7:00p.m.
7:00a.m. North Parking Lot
- December 21** - Youth Group Caroling 6:30p.m.
Meet at the church
- December 23** - Christmas Eve Worship
Practice 6:15p.m.
- December 24** - Christmas Eve Worship
5:00p.m.
- December 27** - NO CHURCH SCHOOL
- December 28** - NO YOUTH GROUP
- January 4** - Youth Group Bowling 6:30p.m.
Meet at the church
- January 11** - Youth Group Youth Board
Meeting & Pit Tournament
6:30p.m.
- January 18** - Youth Group Valentine's Dinner
Practice 11:00a.m. - 4:00p.m.
Lunch served
- January 25** - Youth Group VDP 6:30p.m.
- February 1** - Youth Group Plan for Souper
Bowl Sunday 6:30p.m.
- February 8** - Youth Group VDP 6:30p.m. ???
(May choose not to meet)
- February 13** - Valentine's Dinner Theater
6:30p.m.
- May 2** - Youth Group Progressive Dinner Time
TBA
- May 16** - Youth Group Video Scavenger Hunt
Time TBA
- July 11-15** - Vacation Bible School



Christmas Eve Worship

Following is the schedule for the 5:00p.m. Christmas Eve worship service practices. If your child/youth are participating, we expect them to attend this rehearsal schedule:

Wednesday, December 16
Youth Choirs-5:30p.m.-6:15p.m.-Sanctuary
Rehearsal - 6:15p.m.-7:15p.m.- Sanctuary

Wednesday, December 23
Youth Choirs-5:30p.m.-6:15p.m.-
Sanctuary
Rehearsal - 6:15p.m.-7:15p.m.- Sanctuary

Thursday, December 24
Worship-5:00p.m.

(Youth choir singers, please be at the church at 4:00p.m. for choir warm up; others, please be at the church by 4:30p.m. to get dressed and ready to go.)

Prayer List & Other Items of Interest

Please Pray For...

The World

Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

The Church

First Congregational UCC, Abingdon

Federated Church of Avon, Avon

The Community

For babies that are born early and those that are already in the NICU

The still suffering alcoholic

Friends & Family

Family of Julian DeKeuninck, passed away December 12, brother of Judy Byrd

Tanya Wandrey

Craig Morton, recovering at home

Paul Hoff

Steve Satterthwaite, surgery recovery

Harley Cox, surgery recovery

Jack Unzicker

Brayden Browne, Red Wagon Preschool Student

Ron Smith

Mary Woodburn, Amber Ridge

Ruth Brink

Marjorie Parker, Lighthouse

Robert Glass, son of Sandy Glass

Richard Laws, VA Hospital, Quincy, Illinois

Sydney Sophia Mowen

Karla Lohman, friend of Kristin Dowell

Marvin Anderson, grandfather of Denise Browning

Catherine Jasper, Rosewood

All those in assisted or skilled care facilities

For those who have lost a pet

Those Serving in the Military

Night Out In the Cold

Dec. 18

On October 30, the youth of First Congregational Church tried to sleep outside in the cold to raise the awareness of those who are homeless. In the discussion, and during a very windy and rainy evening, we retired inside to talk about our adventure. Since that time, we have been in contact with other churches who are also trying to make people aware of not only homeless, but also displaced youth. These are youth who might be jumping from friend's house to friend's house, but not necessarily out in the cold. We are inviting several churches to join us in this mission. On December 18, we would like to invite youth and anyone else who would like to join us, for another Night Out in the Cold. This will be done in the north parking lot of First Congregational Church beginning at 7:00p.m. and ending with a breakfast at 7:00a.m. in the small dining room. If you are interested, or have any questions, please feel free to contact **Heidi** at the office or email her at heidi.hulme@netexpress.net.

Blankets for Babies Project Dedication

Thanks to your generous gifts of fleece, the **Children's Worship team**, the **Jr. High** and **Sr. High classes** have made 18 blankets for the Blankets for Babies Project that **Emma Wichman** started after she was crowned Jr. Miss Iowa 2009 in June of this year. We will have a blanket dedication during both worship services on Sunday, December 20. Help us send these blankets off with prayer to be blessings to the families that receive them.

Save This Date!!

January 17, 2010

Church Life & Growth is sponsoring a Game Night at church in the Son Café & Large Dining Room on Sunday, January 17, 2010. More details to come in upcoming bulletin announcements and the next newsletter (January 13, 2010). We had an awesome time at the last Game Night! You will not want to miss this one. Contact **Marcia Renaud** at 563.324.2170 if you have any questions.

**NO Church Bridge
in January 2010
We will resume in February**

Christmas Happenings

Christmas Cantata

Dec. 20



Chancel Choir and Chamber Orchestra cantata will be held on Sunday, December 20 at 3:00p.m. in the sanctuary. Desserts will be served following the cantata in the parlor.

Christmas Fund Offering for 2009

There is one constant that remains true even in these times: God has never forsaken the promise to care for the covenant people. The UCC Christmas Fund is a wonderful way to give a gift to those who have faithfully served the church and find themselves struggling with financial needs in retirement.

Formerly known as the Veterans of the Cross offering, The Christmas Fund is one of four all-church offerings and is administered by the Pension Boards.

The Christmas Fund provides Christmas gift checks to low-income, retired clergy and their widowed spouses. It also supplies emergency assistance and helps finance pension and health benefit supplementation for retired clergy and lay persons.

Last year, 331 emergency grants were distributed, and 664 retirees on small pensions received a \$250 gift in their stockings, thanks to donations to The Christmas Fund.

To retirees on a pension, the current economic environment means paying higher bills with less income.

The Longest Night Worship Service

December 21 from 4:00p.m. to 4:45p.m.

Close to the darkest and shortest day of the year we celebrate the birth of Christ, our light. The actual shortest day is December 21 which in many traditions is a time for reflection and anticipation of the light Christ gives us in the places of darkness in our lives. We invite you to join us for a brief, beautiful, and reflective, service of worship on the shortest day of the year in the sanctuary at 4:00 p.m. We will share in some carols and some wonderful spiritual readings and prayers that draw on the imagery of winter and the gifts of God in the coming Christ.

The service focuses on finding light in places of darkness and will be helpful to anyone who has going through challenges, losses, changes, or who simply needs a time to refocus in the busy holidays. Please invite others in our community who can benefit from such a time of celebration and reflection.

5:00p.m. Christmas Eve Worship Service Collection

We will be taking a donation of hats and mittens for area schools and preschools at the 5:00p.m. Christmas Eve worship service. We will have a basket at each door to put these donations.



Christmas Poinsettias



Red and white poinsettias will adorn our sanctuary during the month of December. If you would like to give a flower in memory of a loved one, please indicate below and return this form to the church office. A \$10.00 donation is requested. The church will order the poinsettias.

Given in Memory of _____

Given by _____

An Interview with Pastor Allen (page 1)

Note: This is the first of a series of interviews with staff and church members.

Pastor Allen, one of your primary duties as a pastor is preaching. Tell us what do you do to prepare your sermons?

I believe preaching is the very heart of my ministry. It is not simply putting together a speech to be given each Sunday. It is much more than that. The very act of preparing the sermon each week is an opportunity for myself to grow spiritually and to deepen my relationship with the congregation. First, the message of the scripture has to speak to me. Before I preach the message to the congregation, I must preach it to myself. Second, preparation for preaching requires praying for the congregation and our members. I think about what church members are going through, and I reflect on the congregation spiritually.

About how long does it take to prepare a sermon?

It takes me from 10 to 12 hours per week. I believe this is typical of most pastors who take the task seriously. It is not just writing a sermon, it is prayerful reflection, rigorous study of the scripture to be sure what I say comes out of the Word, a review of how others have approached preaching the scripture, and creative time to illustrate and write the sermon. That is the reason, I often spend time on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings in my home office. It is time to pray, concentrate, and create. That requires a certain amount of peaceful space, though I am now coming to the church on Monday mornings for study time and prayer.

Why not just preach an old sermon or borrow someone else's sermon?

Old sermons rob me of the opportunity to reflect and be in relationship with the congregation at this point in its life and listen to how the Spirit may lead me to speak now. I preach a living Word and preaching old sermons can lead to laziness and deadness. I do find it useful to read how other preachers have approached a scripture and get inspiration from their stories. But it would be wrong to simply preach another person's sermon. Even when I may use someone else's approach to a scripture, I must make it my own message and, when possible, allow their stories to inspire recalling a similar story in my own experience.

How do you come up with those stories you tell and are they true?

I reflect on the scripture not just for an academic point, but one that relates scripture to our lives. I ask myself when I write a sermon, "So what? Does this matter?" Southerners are great story tellers and I grew up hearing wonderful stories in church and in my family. I do change details and

names when I feel it is necessary to protect the privacy and the trusted relationship of someone I know.

How do you put the sermon to memory?

I learned to do that when I preached outside in the summer at my last church, one time my sermon blew away. I learned there is more of a relationship with the congregation if you trust yourself to preach without notes. Most people, though not all, seem to value that. I like to use the pulpit from time to time - funeral and high days in the church year. I am still playing with what works best and sometimes I am in and out of the pulpit during a sermon. Frankly, sometimes I am in the pulpit because the kids were up that night and it is just what I have to do. I do some memorizing of the sermon on Saturday afternoons and then I get into the office on Sunday mornings around 6:30 a.m. to do the rest.

What do you do the rest of the week?

Mondays are my time to write my agenda for the week and to make pastoral calls I learned about on Sunday. That is also a day I may go to the hospital to make a visit when we have someone in the hospital. Once a month I go to the retired folks breakfast which is on Tuesday. Jackie, Sara and I meet to go over those who have a pastoral need and decide who we each will visit. Late morning we have staff meeting. That afternoon, we have worship planning. Wednesday afternoon is open for pastoral visits and counseling in my office as well as anything administrative. Thursday morning, I write the sermon. I do many of my pastoral visits on Thursday afternoon. On Friday, I am very good at setting apart time for my family. I often take Saturday mornings with family and then work on Saturday afternoons. Funerals and weddings are exceptions to this. I have about 10 committees I relate directly to, and I go to many of those meetings, most of which are at night. I am thinking more strategically as to when I go to those meetings as I also want to be with members at fellowship events, allow for more pastoral contacts and counseling, as well as, when possible not be out of the home in the evenings more than three nights in a particular week. Most weeks I work about 45 to 55 hours, and more hours when there is a funeral or wedding. Even when not at work, I enjoy reflecting and discerning.

(Interview continued on the next page...)

With an active, changing schedule, how do you find balance in your life?

Well, I believe it is very important to not be so busy that you are not available to people. That is a struggle for all of us as pastors. Ministry is relationship and relationship means being available. So unless I am in deep study or prayer, I have an open door in my office and enjoy greeting people when they are at church and make time for counseling when requested. The larger church (most major denominations) understands the demands on pastors and I am thankful that our church follows the guidelines of our denomination and offers four weeks of vacation, two weeks of study leave, and a sabbatical leave time every five years as time to rejuvenate and connect with family. I am a better pastor when I take those time and have more to offer.

What is your greatest joy and challenge in your ministry at First Congregational Church?

My greatest joy are those times when I am invited into people's lives at critical points and am able to reflect God's love in some way. I also have joy as I watch very dedicated church leaders fulfill our mission of Seeking, Serving, and Sharing Christ. I have seen that happen in so many ways in this past year. The biggest challenge is to remember that I am called by God to FCC and to not let the disappointments, my own shortcomings, and setbacks take the joy I have in responding to that call. It is all about learning to trust that God's Spirit is at work in our church even with our limitations, and to be patient.



Then the
glory of the LORD
shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together."
Isaiah 40:5, NRSV

A Message from Your Parish Nurse...

ADVENT MEMORIAL RITUAL

This year at First Congregational, some of you are practicing a Home Advent candle lighting ritual. The theme of hope, love and expectation can still be applied, even if your life is in a time of grief or loss. As an alternative and/or addition to your advent passages consider this "memorial" which can be modified to fit your situation:

As we light these four candles in honor of you, we light one for our grief, one for our courage and one for our memories, and one for our love.

This candle represents our grief. The pain of losing you is intense. It reminds us of the depth of our love for you.

This candle represents our courage-to confront our sorrow-to comfort each other, to change our lives. This light is in your memory-the times we laughed, the times we cried, the time were angry with each other, the silly thing you did, the caring and joy you gave us.

This light is the light of love. As we enter this time of remembering and celebration, day by day we cherish the special place in our hearts that will always be reserved for you. We thank you for the gift your living brought-for the lessons you taught-for the time shared-for the love you gave. We love you and celebrate you now and forever.

Healthy Holiday Helpers

Chill on the Candy Cane Consumption. Too much sugar lowers our immune system's ability to keep us healthy. How about one small treat a day?

Beware of Excess Christmas Cheer. Beverages are a big part of holiday celebrations, but limit sugary drinks to special treats. Drink plain water for thirst, or herbal teas.

Take Those Multivitamins.

Don't Take a Holiday From Exercise. Exercise is another big booster to the immune system.

Read the Directions on Any Health Products. This is especially important for children's over-the-counter products. Complications have occurred when:

- Children are given more than one medication;
- Multiple medications contain too much of the same or similar active ingredients;
- Dosage directions are not properly followed.

Be Vigilant When Traveling. Watch the air quality and temperature. Winter air can be drier; moist air is healthier to breathe. Going through all those climate zones, remember to pack a nasal saline solution to keep air passages moist

Moisturize the Air in Your Home. Run a vaporizer or humidifier in your room at night, or take a steamy shower.

Get Your Rest. As the days get shorter and the nights longer, we all need at least 8-9 hours sleep.

Practice Healthy Habits. The holidays are a time for sharing - but not things like cups, plates, silverware, food or drinks. Also, remember to wash those hands!

The Christmas Pledge

Believing in the true spirit of Christmas, I commit myself to

- Remember those people who truly need my gifts
- Express my love in more direct ways than gifts
- Examine my holiday activities in the light of my deepest values
- Be a peacemaker within my circle of family and friends
- Rededicate myself to my spiritual growth

Wishing all of you a healthy and blessed Christmas and New Year!



From the Business Manager...

Harley's Back!

On Thursday, December 10 **Harley Cox**, our wonderful night custodian, came back to work after having surgery and being off for four weeks. Harley is feeling good and is glad to be back to work. Thank you for your prayers and concerns for Harley during this time.

A HUGE Thank you

Even though Harley was out of commission, the Red Wagon preschool rooms still needed cleaning every night. Let me tell you, these are not the easiest tasks. **Amanda Peterson**, a teacher with Red Wagon, worked her normal teaching shift every day (anywhere from 8 to 9 hours) and then spent about four to five hours cleaning the preschool every night. I cannot tell you what it meant to have Amanda take this responsibility on. Amanda also gave up her normal Wednesday night church school class she teaches to help the church out. Amanda was compensated for her work, but her efforts to make this transition go smoothly for us are definitely priceless. Amanda, thank you for being our cleaning angel!

Another HUGE Thank You

While Kathy Cox, Harley's wife, was out taking care of Harley that first week, we had another volunteer come in and clean the floors in the dining room, the Son Café, and the kitchen. **Ron Gruhlke**, my father-in-law, came in and washed those floors (one floor was washed four times!). Mind you, Ron is not technically a member of the church, but he has been coming consistently since moving to the Quad Cities and wanted to give back in a way that he could. Pastor Allen says that giving of your time and/or talents is just as important as giving money to the church. Ron, we thank you for your hard work.

Yet a Third HUGE Thank You

I have had a goal of rotating the financial records of the church for about two years. There never seems like there is time to get upstairs to take care of this task. I had a person see my plea in the newsletter and said she would take the task on. My mother-in-law, **Cathy Gruhlke**, came in and in two days had all paperwork in boxes and labeled with each year. After she accomplished this goal of mine, I felt a bit guilty that it only took her two days and I have been trying to do it for two years, but hey, IT'S DONE! Cathy, thank you for volunteering your time to the church. Of course, it means the world to me.

Giving Report

as of November 30, 2009

2009 Budget Pledge Goal	\$463,960
2009 Actual Pledges	\$458,106
2009 Pledging Units	265

Monthly Budget Pledge Income Goal	\$ 38,663
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Monthly Actual Pledge Income Goal	\$ 38,176
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November Actual Pledge Income	\$ 34,112.39
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This report reflects giving only to the general operating fund. Additional gifts directed to specific ministries are not included here. Please contact the church office if there are any questions.



November 2009

\$43.62

Is Your 2009 Pledge Current?

This is a friendly reminder that you have until **Thursday, December 31** to pay the remainder of your 2009 pledge. Also, all envelopes postmarked by December 31 will be credited for 2009. If you are unsure as to your pledge status, please contact Shannon in the church office at 309.762.0787. There is still time to turn in a pledge for 2010!

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Worship Service for The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity January 24, 2010 at 4:00pm hosted by First Congregational Church

THEME

The theme for the 2010 celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is "You Are Witnesses of These Things". It comes from Luke's gospel chapter 24 verse 48. This is also the theme which Scottish Christians have chosen to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Edinburgh Mission Conference.

It is generally held that the 1910 World Mission Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland marked the beginnings of the modern ecumenical movement. To honor the 100th anniversary of this foundational event in the history of the ecumenical movement the promoters of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - The World Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity chose the theme, "Witnessing to Christ today". In response, the churches suggested as the theme "You are Witnesses of These Things".

The Quad City area planning committee is composed of both area Catholic and Protestant churches, including from Moline: Christ the King Catholic Church, First Congregational Church United Church of Christ, Hope United Church of Christ, and Sacred Heart Catholic Church; from Rock Island: St. Pius X Catholic Church, St. James Lutheran Church ELCA; and from Milan: St. Miria Goretti Catholic Church; and Ron Quay, Director of Churches United of the Quad Cities Area.

PARTICIPANTS

The **Reverend Phil Hart** will be guest preacher this year. Rev. Hart is the Interim Conference Minister for the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC). Before moving to Chicago in 2008, he served as the Interim Conference Minister of the Ohio Con-

ference of the UCC, where he led six separate corporations (conference and associations) to move to a common database and financial program, led the restructuring of the Outdoor Ministries Program, and coordinated the work of the Ohio Conference staff. His education and his professional training include a Masters of Theology, a Masters of Divinity, and training as an intentional interim pastor.

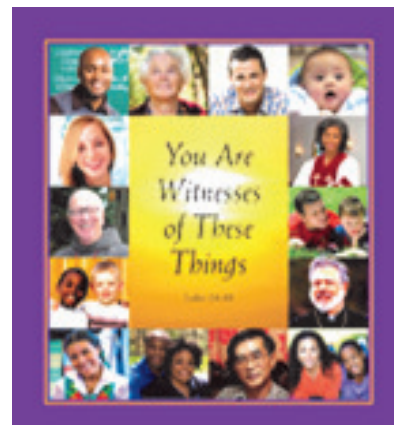
Associate Pastor at First Congregational Church, **Rev. Jackie Perry**, said that "Rev. Hart was invited because he has a heart for Christian unity and he is an inspiring preacher. Rev. Hart is viewed as a non-anxious person whose faith is apparent in the words he writes and the words he speaks. Pastor Hart speaks well, writes well, and listens well. We look forward to hearing God's word concerning Christian unity on January 24.

Chloë Stodt, Organist and Music Ministry Coordinator at First Congregational Church, recommended the music for this year's service and will serve as this year's organist.

Organizing the unity choir from area churches are Karen Manning and Barbara Roedel of St. Pius X. Suzi Budde of Sacred Heart will serve as cantor, and **Paul Renaud** of First Congregational Church will direct the unity choir.

Youth from various churches will serve as readers for the prayers for the world. The offering will go to Great River Bend to support a new drop-in youth shelter.

Women's Connections will provide a simple reception after the service.



Meal Site Dates for 2010

Sign up in the library and pick up a guide for serving at the Churches United meal site. The next opportunities are **January 21 & April 15 at Mt. Zion, East Moline.** See **Pastor Jackie** if you have any questions.



Coffee fellowship is being served by Wellness/Parish Nurse in December & Church Council in January

Would you like a ride to worship?

If you would like the church van to bring you to 11:00a.m. worship, please call the church office by Friday at 309.762.0787. Driver for December is **Cliff Carlson** and **Gordon Panicucci** for January.



Join Bell Choir!

Has the Handbell Choir inspired you to think "That looks fun, I'd like to try bell ringing?" If so, you are in luck! January is a great time to join the bell choir. The second half of the ringing season starts Wednesday, January 6, 2009 at 7:15p.m. If you would like to try ringing, leave a message for **Gail** at 563.355.5664 or talk to any ringer so that we have music prepared for you. See you on January 6!!

The Children's Book Bank

This is a new venture in our community operated by **volunteers** to instill the love of reading in children. The Children's Book Bank will serve children through Grade 6. The books will be given to them throughout the year **free of charge.**

We need **your** donations of new or gently loved books appropriate for this age group. Collection boxes will be in the Son Café, under the sign up sheets table, starting December 1.

Help us **share** the **magic of words** with your contributions.

Pick up can be arranged for large quantities

Thank you,
Jo Jamieson
309.786.7161



ECLECTIC FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

Tunes reminiscent of Appalachian, Irish, Latin, Cajun, and Early American folk music will fill our sanctuary on Sunday, December 20. Conducted by **Paul Renaud**, the church's 25-voice chancel choir will present contemporary composer Pepper Choplin's Christmas cantata, "I Hear the Prophet Callin': The Christmas Story from Prophecy to Fulfillment." The concert begins at 3:00p.m., and will be followed by Christmas desserts and hot cider, served in the church parlor. Joining the choir is a twelve-member chamber orchestra consisting of Pat Burr, first violin; Molly Clark, second violin; Debbie Wegener, viola; Julie Wince, cello; Tanner Thom, contrabass; Cheryl Jordan, flute/penny whistle/ recorder/ alto flute; Erica Venema, oboe; **Marcia Renaud**, accordion; **Chloë Stodt**, piano; Pete Philhower, first percussion; **Audra Bailey**, second percussion; and Caitlin Thom, third percussion/ harp. If you can't make the late service on Christmas Eve, this concert is for you!!

The cantata will be repeated at the 11:00p.m. candlelight service on Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24, with the addition of Alan Guss, French horn. Speaking of Christmas Eve, two earlier services are scheduled that day: the 5:00p.m. service is a youth-led worship featuring children's and youth choirs conducted by Chloë Stodt, congregational carol singing, and a costumed Nativity tableau. The 7:00p.m. service is a reflective candlelight service featuring traditional Christmas scripture readings as well as contemporary meditations from various writers. The First Congregational Campanella Ringers, conducted by **Gail Glockhoff-Long**, and organist Chloë Stodt will provide the music. Mark your calendar now--there's something for everyone on Christmas Eve here at First Congregational!

Miscellaneous & Missions

Thank You Notes

I want to thank you for the First Congregational Church's donation of \$1,200.00 to Habitat for Humanity Quad Cities made possible through the Chili Cook Off.

Thanks to the generosity of donors like you, our affiliate has completed 61 homes for partner families in the Quad Cities since 1993. Each family contributes over 250 hours of "sweat equity", which includes helping construct their own and other Habitat homes and attending a series of homeownership classes. Families then purchase their homes with a down payment and no-interest mortgage. Through this partnership, the dedication of many volunteers and generous contributions, we can make homeownership a reality for families that would not otherwise have the opportunity.

Your contribution has provided a "hand up" for a Quad City family and will make an impact on our entire community. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Debbie Jackson,
Director of Development

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Thank you to all those who have served meals on behalf of Little Blessings this year. **Eleanor Diehl, Jessie Peters, Kayla Miller, Becca Peterson, Marla Mothershed, Anne Walters, Jill Colgan, Heidi Hulme, Linda Shearer, Deanna Wennekamp, Red Wagon, Nancy Ulrich, Nicole Smith, Shannon Gruhlke, Denise Browning, and Koann Eaton.** This ministry would not be possible without you!

**Lori Churchill,**  
Little Blessings Coordinator



Since the Great Storm delayed its arrival for two days, the Women's Connections had a lovely Saturday, December 5 for their Christmas Tea festivities. With a crowd of almost 75 people, the ladies en-

joyed an afternoon listening to songs of the season provided by our Music Director, **Chloë Stodd**, admiring the beautiful long table centerpiece arranged by **Katie Ainsworth**, and sampling the many goodies provided by the ladies of the church. There was coffee and tea, and **Corinne Potter's** famous Wassail, as well as cookies, tiny tea sandwiches, small tarts, decorative cookies and candies. At three o'clock, the **Chamber Singers from Moline High School** took to the steps in the sanctuary to provide a choral program, under the direction of **Mr. Ron May**, accompanied by **Mrs. Hesler**, who played a beautiful Claire de Lune on the piano, while the choir sang Silent Night at the same time. It was beautiful!

The elves, otherwise known as **Lois Wadsworth, Carol Kroeger, Elly Rohrbach, Dixie Duckett, Gail Ridge, Sally Scott, Jan Hemmingson and Janet Minnehan**, began early Friday morning packaging and pricing the many donations of fudge, divinity, cookies, etc., which had been donated for sale. Among the goodies were **Ginny Larsen's** green wreaths (marshmallow, butter, cereal), **Laura Miller's** Creme de Menthe layer cookies, brownies from **Kristin Dowell**, many fudges, **Sunny Moorhusen's** old fashioned home made apple butter, and many other Christmas cookies. Other donors of record were **Harriett Paschall, Peg Brinkmeyer, Larry Shellenberger**, who brought a lovely mixed berry pie, **Mary Curry** and **Pat Martin**. (Please forgive me if I've omitted or forgotten your name).

The little finger sandwiches, and other cookies and bars were donated to be refreshments at the tea by **Jill Colgan, Ginny Larsen, Mary Mahar, Kathleen Rynott, Rosemary Graham, Jeanne Gale, and Donna Larson**.

Our junior ladies, **Lexy Reynolds, April Newell, and Maggie Driscall** were the servers for the afternoon who made sure everyone was properly taken care of. Last, but not least, were our ever faithful "men folk," **Alan Larsen** and **Bill Keller** who washed and dried every dish and kept the coffee and tea brewing. Our thanks also to our church staff members, for their hard work and support: **Chloë** for the festive Christmas music, **Heidi** for helping with junior support and the nursery, **Coral** for keeping the tea in the news, and **Shannon** for her helpful hugs and understanding. Without **Kathy Cox** assisting with set up, we would have been eating on the floor! Many thanks and Peace.

**Sally Sohner,**  
Chair of the Annual Women's

You can view this newsletter in COLOR on our website: [www.FCCMoline.org](http://www.FCCMoline.org)

# Calendar

**Friday, December 18**

- 5:00 pm Butz Wedding Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 7:00 pm Quad Cities Night Out In The Cold, North Parking Lot

**Saturday, December 19**

- 7:00 am Night Out In The Cold Breakfast, Kitchen/Café
- 4:00 pm Butz Wedding, Sanctuary
- 5:30 pm Worship, Large Dining Room

**Sunday, December 20**

- 8:00 am Christian Hospitality Meeting, Parlor
- 9:00 am Worship, Sanctuary
- 10:00 am Fellowship, Café, Lower Level
- 10:10 am Church School
- 10:20 am Cherub Choir Rehearsal, Red Flames Room
- 11:00 am Worship, Sanctuary
- 3:00 pm Choir Cantata, Sanctuary, Reception in Parlor following

**Monday, December 21**

- 10:30 am Rock Island County Historical Society, Large Dining Room
- 4:00 pm Longest Night Worship Service, Sanctuary
- 4:30 pm Board of Trustees Meeting, Board Room
- 6:30 pm Mary Kay Meeting, Parlor
- 6:30 pm Youth Christmas Caroling, Meet at Church

**Tuesday, December 22**

- 7:00 pm Diaconate Meeting, Parlor
- 7:00 pm Banjoleers, Music Room

**Wednesday, December 23**

- 6:15 pm Youth Christmas Eve Rehearsal, Sanctuary

**Thursday, December 24**

- 5:00 pm Youth Christmas Eve Worship Service, Sanctuary
- 7:00 pm Campanella Ringers Christmas Eve Worship Service, Sanctuary
- 11:00 pm Chancel Choir Christmas Eve Worship Service, Sanctuary

**Friday, December 25 OFFICE CLOSED****Saturday, December 26 NO WORSHIP SERVICE****Sunday, December 27**

- 9:00 am Worship, Sanctuary, Millman Baptism
- 10:00 am Fellowship, Café, Lower Level
- 10:10 am Church School
- 11:00 am Worship, Sanctuary

**Monday, December 28 OFFICE CLOSED****Tuesday, December 29**

- 9:00 am Retired Folks, Village Inn, 53<sup>rd</sup> St., Moline
- 7:00 pm Banjoleers, Music Room

**Wednesday, December 30 NO ACTIVITIES****Thursday, December 31 OFFICE CLOSING AT 1:00P.M.**

- 5:00 pm New Year's Eve Worship Service, Community of Christ Church, Moline

**Friday, January 1 OFFICE CLOSED****Saturday, January 2**

- 5:30 pm Worship, Large Dining Room

**Sunday, January 3**

- 9:00 am Worship, Sanctuary
- 10:00 am Fellowship, Café, Lower Level
- 10:10 am Church School
- 10:20 am Cherub Choir Rehearsal, Red Flames Room
- 11:00 am Worship, Sanctuary

**Monday, January 4**

- 6:00 pm Personnel Meeting, Pastor Allen's Office
- 6:30 pm Youth Group Bowling, Meet at Church
- 6:30 pm Mary Kay Meeting, Parlor

**Tuesday, January 5**

- 1:00 pm Mississippi Valley Quilters Guild, Large Dining Room
- 5:30 pm Executive Board Meeting, Pastor Allen's Office
- 6:30 pm Church Life & Growth Board Meeting, Jr. High Room
- 7:00 pm Christian Education Board Meeting, Board Room
- 7:00 pm Music Board Meeting, Parlor
- 7:00 pm Banjoleers, Music Room

**Newsletter Article****DEADLINES:****Fridays 5:00p.m.****January 8****January 22****DATES ARE FINAL, SO BE SURE TO GET YOUR ITEMS TO THE OFFICE ON TIME!****Email your items for the newsletter to [coral@fccmoline.org](mailto:coral@fccmoline.org)**



# Happy Birthday to...



## December

1. Christian Seyller  
Chase Owen
2. Madeline Eaton  
Al Ulrich
3. Rita Melin
4. Donna Antu  
Addison Sanders
5. Peter Owen  
Bill Frazier
6. Ian Newell  
Tom Carlson  
Nick Davis
- 7.
8. Michael Wendt Jr.  
Greg Douglas
9. William Gibbons  
Trey Larsen
- 10.
11. Addison Leach
12. Marley Patrick  
Carol Doyle  
Maximilian Sorgenfrey
13. Gordon Ainsworth  
Tom Liljegren
14. Hollis Hohensee
15. Brent McCormick
16. Diann Moore  
Kim Fuller
17. Sherry Reynolds
18. George Jamieson  
Laura Miller  
Vivian Panicucci  
Andrew Bealer
19. Karl Huntoon  
Art Gustus  
Toni Ensey
20. Deb Anderson  
Rebecca Peterson  
Sandra Mulder  
Ryan Butz
21. Stephen Biscontine  
Elly Rohrbach  
Sharon Bannas
22. Bill Wandrey
- 23.
- 24.
25. Susan Ehmsen  
Elaine Pratt  
Eric Butz
26. Jon Chapman
27. Kath Wilson
- 28.
29. Melissa Hoff
30. Phyllis Bivens  
Rachel McGuire  
Kyle Lewis  
Charles Curry  
George VanVooren
31. Gail Gibbons  
Arno Panicucci  
Chris Owen  
Jane Schultze

*Please let the  
church office  
know if we  
have missed  
your special day!*



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**First Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ**  
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Moline, Illinois 61265

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We want to be good stewards of the church's financial resources.  
If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please contact  
Coral at 309.762.0787 or [cminge@netexpress.net](mailto:cminge@netexpress.net). Thank you!



*Mission Statement of  
First Congregational Church  
Seeking, Serving, and Sharing Christ*