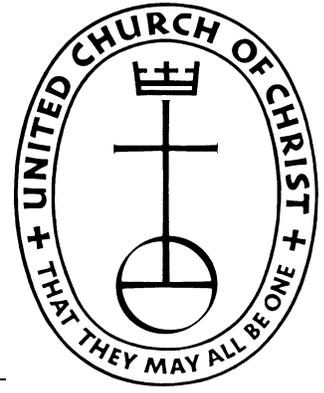


First Christian United Church of Christ Newsletter September 2017



*The Annual Ice Cream Social was truly a “sweet”
time of fellowship!*

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PASTOR'S COLUMN

I thank you for allowing me to step into your space for the summer. It is my hope that you had a restful, fun and peaceful sabbatical. I know that First Christian will be glad to have their pastor back.

First Christian, thank you for allowing me to be a part of the First Christian UCC family this summer. I have enjoyed my time with you and have enjoyed the opportunity to stretch and to grow while walking alongside you in your daily lives. Thank you for sharing yourselves with me and for giving me the space to be who I am. Also, thank you for the care and compassion that you show to each other and to me.

Matt, Joan, & Connie, thank you for making my "job" this summer possible. I could not have agreed to do this without help from you and you have been a wonderful, supportive, kind and fun staff to work with.

It has been a good summer! I encourage you as you move into the Fall of the year that you continue to pay attention to who God is calling you to be, that you continue to offer God's love freely to each other and to the community, and that you continue to embrace your gifts from God to discern your next steps on your journey. May God bless you and keep you, may God's grace be upon you, may you know God's peace and love in all that you do.

With love and appreciation,

Beth

NEWS FROM REV. MARK PICKETT

Greetings to all! I'm writing this on eclipse day out at the beach for the last two weeks of my sabbatical leave. It all seems to have gone very quickly, but that's because we packed a lot into the past three months. Before we left, Nancy Thomas said to be sure that we had several "awe" moments along the way. I'm happy to report, Nancy, that there were many. And throughout, both Margot and I felt your prayers and blessings and an abiding gratitude to you all.

Thank you for making this happen. Thanks also to Beth Kennett for both her ministry during this time as well as her wonderful spirit in doing so. And, Beth, I hope that you had fun reconnecting with folks at First Christian. And to all who put in extra duty helping to "carry the load" in my absence, blessings upon you!

Early on in the sabbatical, Mary Newsome sent a message saying – take a lot of pictures and plan on an art show in the gallery when you return. That thought hadn't crossed my mind till that moment, but ever since I've been looking for good shots to share. Look for "Mary's" display starting the second Sunday in September, my first Sunday back.

Which will also be Homecoming – very appropriate! I understand that the Deacons have been hard at work on details. Look for another article elsewhere in this newsletter, but we will once more honor church members who passed away 5, 10, and 15 years ago. Also, there will be a wonderful luncheon following worship.

It has been a good, rich, and renewing sabbatical, and I will share more later but, for now, I am very much looking forward to seeing you all again. Look for me in the office starting September 5th.

Mark

P.S. (A few hours later) There is one more wonder to add to the sabbatical list of "awes" – the eclipse. It was remarkable. I hope the clouds were kind to all viewers in Burlington. On the beach at Ocracoke, there was 91% coverage. Temperatures dropped significantly during the eclipse and the light had a totally unique quality – sort of like dusk on a very cloudy day, only it was a very "sunny" day. It truly was awe inspiring and, being a minister, my mind went somewhere that I suspect few others did. As I looked through my safety glasses at just the smallest sliver of the remaining sun, then took them off and looked at the dimness of the beach, I was struck by the power of the sun. There was so little of it that shone around the moon, and yet you could still see remarkably well in the dimness. Immediately, Paul's reference to "seeing in a glass darkly" came to mind. Then it struck me, the mystery and wonder that is the totality of God is surely like the sun at the height of the

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eclipse. We can only perceive a small portion of that totality. The problem is that often far too many believe that they perceive mystery that is God with perfect clarity. If you or I are ever tempted to step into those shoes, if we are ever tempted to believe that we are “right” in our theological judgments and others are “wrong,” it’s time to pray for a bit of God-sent wisdom and humility to set us right until that time comes when the totality of God’s mystery and majesty will be revealed and we “see God face to face,” as Paul puts it. Until that time, may you and I all struggle for God’s shared wisdom together. We need all the help our very limited vision can get!

Blessings on you all!

SUPPER CLUB SEPTEMBER 5TH

Every time that the Supper Club meets, it ranks swell. Many have participated in the gatherings and all have had a wonderful time. The next event will be held Smithfield Chicken and Bar-B-Q, 1372 Tiki Lane, Burlington on September 6th, 2016 at 6:00 pm. From South Church Street turn on to Saint Mark’s Church road (on corner are a gas station and a bank). Go straight through three stop lights turning left at the stop sign. Go straight approximately 1/3 of a mile and the restaurant will be in front of you.

In order to reserve a space, please call Eleanor Lovgren at 336-226-2671 by Thursday, August 31st at 8:00 pm. And invite a friend.

ART SHOW FOR SEPTEMBER

The hallway between our Education Building and the sanctuary, now known as our art gallery, has been a successful venture at First Christian. During the month of September Rev. Mark Pickett will be our featured artist. He will be sharing some of his pictures from his summer adventures. We have been blessed with many beautiful works of art from our church family! Stop by and enjoy the talent of our members!

JOURNEY TO GENEROSITY – THE WAY OF JESUS

The Board of Finance has begun working on a budget for First Christian United Church of Christ for 2018. In this process we are seeking to be good stewards of the money that has been shared with this church to enable it to carry out ministry in Jesus’ name, and projecting how we may continue providing quality spiritual nourishment, emotional under-girding, and physical support to our members and the community around us.

We will begin a Stewardship Campaign in September as we seek the commitment of members and friends to support the ministry and work that Jesus is seeking to accomplish through this Church Family in 2018.

The theme for our stewardship reflection is "Journey to Generosity, the Way of Jesus". During this time you and I will have the opportunity for our own personal reflection upon what this means to each of us. For me, it means understanding that although we do not have God supplying all of our wants, God does supply us for our needs. God even gives us more than we really need, so that we have the opportunity to share with others for the benefit of those around us.

When the topic is stewardship, we often think it refers just to money and material goods. This is an important part of stewardship, especially when you seek to provide ministry through a building and the people who work to help the church function in its ministry. Stewardship should also be understood as to what we do with our various talents, our many opportunities to make a difference for good in life around us, in how we share our words, and even in the looks we share with others. All of life is really stewardship on what God has entrusted to each of us.

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As we each consider what we may provide and do to help God accomplish God's desire of having life become better around us, may we first reflect upon our own lives and how God has been good to us. Then may we look to Jesus to better learn what Jesus is seeking to accomplish through each of our lives.

Why do you have life, and why has God sustained your life to this day? God has been generous. How is Jesus calling upon you to use your many and various gifts? How generous are you?

SCHEDULE CHANGES FOR SEPTEMBER

Please make note of the following calendar changes in September ...

- The Margaret Lightbourne Circle will meet Monday, September 11th
- The Board of Finance will meet Tuesday, September 12th
- The Official Board will meet Sunday, September 17th
- The Board of Christian Education will meet Sunday, September 17th

HOMECOMING SEPTEMBER 10TH

This year, our Homecoming celebration will be held September 10th at First Christian. This year's activities will be similar to those last year. It will also be the Sunday that Rev. Mark Pickett returns to our pulpit.

We will be remembering those that passed away 5, 10 and 15 years ago. This was a tradition we began a couple of years ago, but it immediately became very meaningful. This year eighteen former members will be recognized. A special candle will be lit for them on the alter and a chime will be sounded upon the reading of each name.

Following worship there will be a special Homecoming potluck supper. The Deacons will provide the meat, beverage and desserts. All others, if you are able, are encouraged to bring a salad, vegetable, or dessert. If you don't have easy access to a kitchen, come anyway. There will be plenty of food! We are asking for anyone having past family photos/albums, of trips, outings, etc. concerning First Christian please bring them that day. They will be displayed and shared with all.

One thing we do ask is that you let us know how many tables to set up. Reservations forms can be found in our Sunday morning bulletins. Or just give the church office a call.

Letters have been sent out to family members of those who will be recognized that day. If you know of other former First Christians who might like to join us, be in touch and offer a special invitation. On Homecoming Sunday – the more, the merrier!

JOHN'S RIVER VALLEY CAMP PLANS A DAY OF CELEBRATION

ALL are invited to a *Celebration* honoring the Rev. C. L. "Curly" Stumb and the impact of his 31 years of ministry by the waters of the Johns River. Event is planned for Saturday, September 23, 2017, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm at Johns River Valley Camp, 6211 Hwy 90, Collettsville, NC 28611. [Register on-line now.](https://secure.lglforms.com/form/engine/s/B90hp57nK8gPBwhP5jP98Q) (<https://secure.lglforms.com/form/engine/s/B90hp57nK8gPBwhP5jP98Q>)

The Rev. C. L. "Curly" Stumb has faithfully served the Outdoor Ministry program of the Southern Conference (and beyond) for 31 years. "Curly" will retire at the end of 2017, and the camp board wants to take this opportunity to celebrate his leadership and the impact he has had on many, many lives through his ministry at Johns River Valley Camp.

The planned day of celebration will allow for friends of the camp to arrive at JRVC before noon to enjoy the site's peace and beauty. The Celebration will begin with a BBQ lunch catered by the Collettsville Ruritan Club (vegetarian meals will be available). Following lunch, there will be time to share stories of the many ways "Curly" has impacted Southern Conference and made a difference in the lives of former campers.

This *Day of Celebration* will end with a litany and prayer of closure for the ministry "Curly" has shared with

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so many, and for his journey forward into a future time framed by retirement.

Registration fees for *The Celebration*:

- Adults - \$22
- Students - (6th grade - college) \$15
- Students - (K - 5th grade) \$10
- Pre-schoolers - \$0

Registration details:

- Register for this Day of Celebration at www.jrvc.org.
- For questions or more information about the Celebration Event, contact Rev. Phil Hardy at 336-266-1617 or phardy.jrvc@gmail.com
- As part of this celebration, the JRVC Board of Trustees is creating the *Curly Stumb Fund* to honor his 31 years of service to JRVC and to enhance and sustain the facilities and grounds of the Camp. Donations to this fund are tax-deductible and may be made online with your registration, brought to the celebration, or mailed to the Camp mailing address: 1055 Niley Cook Rd, Blowing Rock NC 28605.
- Lodging (Boger Site Living Unit rooms, Mainsite cabins and Camper hook-ups) will be available on a first-come, first-served basis ([download rate sheet at http://files.constantcontact.com/8ced9cab001/7b43a2c9-3566-4352-8287-faeb4cec98e9.pdf](#)). Contact the camp for these reservations at 828-264-1516 or stumb@boone.net.

Meal service on the weekend of *The Celebration* will be limited to the Saturday BBQ lunch. Guests lodging at the camp on this weekend will be responsible for their own meals except for the featured lunch.

NEWS FROM THE FCUCC GIRL SCOUTS

Excitement stirs as the Girl Scouts plan for our year! New this fall, our troop is excited to announce her baby sister...Troop 13217! Our numbers have grown allowing us to divide up the fun! Daisy's (K-1), Brownies (2-3), Juniors(4-5), and Cadettes(6-8); each level will meet independently, and come together as needed. Due to this growth, we have asked and been approved to increase our meeting time at First Christian, for which we extend a heartfelt thank you for your generosity! We will be utilizing our "girl scout" room on Thursday nights 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm and Saturdays 3:00 pm – 5:00pm.

New volunteers have been trained as Girl Scout Leaders! Some of the adventures planned for this year include weeding the gardens at First Christian UCC, horseback riding, two camping trips, a Veterans Day parade, Lazy 5 Ranch, Disney on Ice and the list goes on! Stay tuned to learn all about what the Girl Scouts of FCUCC are up to. Watch for more news in future issues of the newsletter!

WELCOME KITS FOR REFUGEES AND REFUGEES FAMILIES

The North Carolina Unit of Church Women United has taken on as its 2017 project the making of Welcome Kits for Refugees and Refugee Families through Church World Service.

It is our hope that every church that receives our information will make at least one kit, more than one would be super good.

In Burlington/Alamance County, the kits can be brought to any of our Celebrations before October 1, 2017, or given directly to CWU State President, Judy Springer, 3831 Wade Coble Drive, Burlington. The kits will then be taken to the 2017 State Assembly/ Leaders' Council for delivery to Church World Services.

Please note: You can make any of the four kits. All items are to be new. Put the contents of each kit into something that will not tear in carrying. Be sure to put a tag on the outside of the container identifying which of the kits is enclosed.

Many items can be purchased for \$1 at Dollar General or Dollar Tree.

Thank you for your help with this project. Kits can be dropped off at the table by the door to the Bray Fellowship Hall.

Personal Hygiene Kit

- Wash Cloth
- Comb
- Feminine pads
- Razors
- Bath Towel
- Nail Clippers
- Deodorant (female)
- Lotion
- Shaving Cream

Bathroom Kit

- Toilet paper
- Shampoo
- Soap
- Hand soap
- Shower curtain with rings
- Floor mat
- Hand towel (2)

Cleaning Kit

- All-purpose cleaner
- Paper towels(4 or 6 pk.)
- Cleaning rag
- Toilet cleaner
- Trash bags
- Light bulbs
- Mop
- Broom
- Dustpan
- Laundry soap
- Dish soap
- Kitchen trash bin
- Sponges

Twin Bed Kit

- Pillow case (2)
- Pillow (2)
- Twin flat sheet
- Twin fitted sheet
- Twin blanket

MARGARET LIGHTBOURNE CIRCLE

The Margaret Lightbourne Circle will meet Monday, September 11th at 1:30 pm in the church conference room. The meeting is being delayed one-week due to the Labor Day Holiday.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Year to Date through 07-31-17

	Actual	Budget
Income:	\$108,278.66	\$126,816.75
<u>Expense</u>	<u>\$113,633.20</u>	<u>\$116,841.55</u>
Net Balance:	<\$5,354.54>	\$9,975.20
Balance in Checking 07-31-17		\$12,678.30

As you can see, everyone's continued support is still greatly needed to carry on the ministry of the church. Please send in your giving today.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Ken Little and Connie Collins
 Treasurer and Accounting Manager