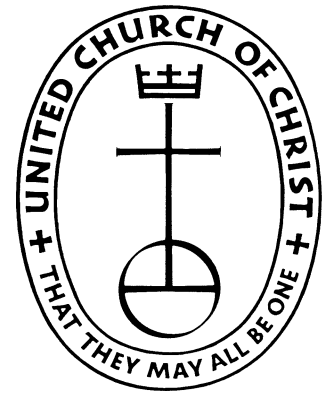


First Christian United Church of Christ Newsletter June/July 2017



Meet Beth Kennett, First Christian's Interim Pastor during Mark's sabbatical leave this summer. Beth Kennett is a United Church of Christ minister, and a graduate of Southeastern Seminary (MDiv). Beth coordinates the consulting and coaching ministries for the Center for Congregational Health through Baptist Hospital in Winston Salem.

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PASTOR'S COLUMN

As I write this, I am trying to wrap things up and get ready for my sabbatical leave. After worship on the 28th, I'll go home, finish packing, then later that evening, hop on a plane to rendezvous with Margot in Europe. Beth Kennett's first Sunday will be June 4th, which is also Pentecost Sunday, our celebration of the birth of the church. What better way to start an interim summer?

Again, I want to thank you for making this possible. I'll have a lot of stories to tell when I return. In the meantime, I hope you all enjoy reconnecting with Beth here at home.

As I mentioned in last month's newsletter, Beth will only be part-time at church so many people will be stepping forward to help fill in the gaps. That will include you! Over the next three months it will be important to keep Joan up-to-date on all the happenings around First Christian, including prayer concerns. In my absence, she will be publishing Wednesday Musings, but in an abbreviated form. Each week she will list upcoming events and those who need our prayers. But she won't have this information if you don't pass it on! Her hours at the church office will continue to be Tuesday – Thursday, 9:00 am – 3:30 pm. You can call 336-226-7428 or email at office@firstchristianucc.org, or stop in for a visit. Things will be quiet this summer and I know she'd love a visit. Joan will pass on all appropriate news to Beth as well as Eleanor Lovgren and Carol Fonville from the Board of Deacons. Share all concerns with Eleanor or Carol, especially if it's a prayer concern that arises after Thursday afternoon. And, of course, you can be in touch with Beth at any time if there is an emergency.

As you can see from this newsletter, there are a number of special events on the horizon. Even though summers are usually quieter than the program year, there is still much that invites your participation. I hope you will take full advantage of all of it!

I look forward to seeing you in September and I know that, in the meantime, you will be in good and capable hands with Beth. And holding us all are the ever-faithful hands of God!

Have a wonderful summer. May many blessings come your way. Keep me in your prayers as you'll remain in mine, and after many, many miles and scores of experiences, I will see you again in the fall.

Mark

LAY SUNDAY PLANNED FOR JULY 2ND

From June 30th till July 4th the General Synod of our United Church of Christ will be meeting in Baltimore, Maryland. Synod is the national gathering of delegates from all 29 of our denomination's conferences. They meet in various parts of the country every two years. This year, Beth has been asked to serve on the staff of the General Synod, so she will be away during that time. As a result, the Spiritual Life Committee of the Board of Deacons decided to sponsor a Lay Sunday on July 2nd in her absence.

With a wealth of talent in the church, this should be a fun and meaningful service. Then, at the end of August when Beth will be away because of her work with the Center for Congregational Health, this same committee will organize another "Stories Behind the Hymns" service. Look for more details on that service later in the summer.

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WELCOME BETH KENNETT



This summer, Mark's church email will be inactivate, but you can always reach Beth at her new church email address: bethkennett@firstchristianucc.org. In addition, she plans to be in the church office on Tuesday mornings.

BINGO NIGHT – JUNE 7TH

Once again this year, Phil Bray will be turning the ball and calling out the numbers. As in year's past the prizes will be spectacular. Mary Newsome has adopted this as a special project and has been working on it for weeks now. Many, many thanks Mary!

The Bray Fellowship Hall fills up quickly for this event so don't be late. Things will get started at 7:00 pm. And, as always, it will be fun for all!

THE SUPPER CLUB – NEXT GATHERING

The Supper Club's next gathering will be on June 6th at 6:00 pm at Harbor Inn Seafood, 2408 S Church St, Burlington. To make a reservation, please call Eleanor Lovgren at 336-226-2671 by June 1st no later than 8:00 pm. All are welcomed. Everyone pays their own bills. Invite a friend! Since the first Tuesday in July is the 4th, the Supper Club will no gather in July.

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SPAGHETTI DINNER / CAKE AUCTION RESULTS

May was a busy month at the church when it came to special dining events. Things started out with the Spaghetti Supper on May 12th followed by our annual Hot Dog Lunch and Cake Auction on the 21st.

In all, approximately \$1900 was raised at the Spaghetti Supper. This was a joint fundraiser for both our Board of Deacons as well as the Alamance Council for the Blind.

The lunch and cake auction netted over \$ 3300 that will go for cancer research through the Relay for Life.

Many thanks to all who participated and helped prepare food for both of these events. You helped to make them a success. Thanks in particular goes to our Board of Deacons who manage all things culinary at First Christian. But special recognition must go to Mike Smith who was tireless in preparing food for both events. Mike, we couldn't have done it without you!



SPECIAL UPCOMING EVENTS

In addition to the events that have been mentioned in individual articles in this edition, there are several more on the horizon. Be sure to mark your calendars:

- June 7th - Bingo Night
- June 15th – The deadline for applications for the Carrie McLean Taylor Scholarship Fund (available on our web site along with the guidelines)
- June 15th Deadline for contributions to Matt Rice's mission trip fund.
- June 18th – Father's Day. There will be a special gift for all fathers attending worship.
- June 20th – The Finance Committee will not meet this month.
- June 22nd – 24th – Southern Conference Annual Meeting will be held in Virginia Beach, VA.
- July 2nd – Lay Sunday
- July 9th – Official Board at 9:00 am rather than 8:30 am.

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CHRISTIAN ED EVENTS

July will be vacation time for our Sunday School classes as people tend to travel throughout the month. Classes will resume on August 6th.

But just because Sunday School is taking a break, doesn't mean that the Board of Christian Education is. Late in the month the Board will be sponsoring it's Summer Symposium.

As you may recall, last summer, the Board changed the name of our "Bible School" to the Summer Symposium. The Rev. Jan Fuller, chaplain at Elon University, was our presenter, speaking on the topic of Christianity and Islam. That event was so successful, the Board decided to continue with a similar theme this year, Christianity and World Religions. At this writing, details of the event are still being finalized. Watch for future information, but save your Monday through Wednesday evenings for either one of the last two weeks in July.

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH OFFERING JUNE 4TH

Dear Friends,

How does your church envision the future of Christianity? Many UCC congregations are asking a range of questions on this subject from "Who are we, and who is God calling us to be?" or "How do we think beyond our walls to impact the community around us for the better?" to "Where are the younger Christians?" Maybe your church knows what it does best, and you are pouring yourselves into that mission with deep intention.

One way your church is already involved in imagining the future is through giving to the UCC's Strengthen the Church Special Mission Offering. Taken on Pentecost Sunday, this offering is used to envision and invest in the many voices of what church can be – to invest in the future of Christianity!

With your gifts to this offering, we are able to fund new ministries that experiment with church beyond the walls of our buildings. We are able to resource and inspire churches seeking to do a bold new thing for the sake of the Gospel. We help churches work together in visioning who they are and who they can be in 2017 and for years to come.

As we know, the shape of Christianity is changing. The ways the church can have an impact on the world around us are multiplying!

Will you help us Strengthen the Church *even more*, through prayerfully receiving this special mission again on Pentecost, June 4th, 2017?

With your help, we can live into the United Church of Christ's vision for a just world for all. Invest in the future of Christianity and the church is investing in the vision of what God is calling is to do, together.

Thank you so much for your gifts, and your commitment to the Strengthen the Church Special Mission Offering. We look forward to continuing to work with you for the future of our beloved church.

With grace and peace,

Rev. Chris Davies

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Strengthen the Church Ministries

HOMETOWN MISSION TRIPS – JUNE 17-20

For many years, members of First Reformed UCC in Burlington have traveled to places like East St. Louis, Washington, DC, the mountains of North Carolina, and even out of the country to share God's love with others through acts of service. This summer, we have decided to stay HOME!

With our existing connections with the Alamance County Meals on Wheels program, we have decided to reach out to MOWS clients to complete some simple tasks at their homes. We may find ourselves:

- Mowing and trimming yards
- Cleaning out flower beds
- Cleaning kitchen counters and appliances
- Sweeping, dusting, vacuuming floors
- Packing up items for donation to Goodwill, Hospice, or Salvation Army
- Trimming shrubs and small trees
- Sweeping and cleaning porches
- Cleaning out refrigerators
- Dusting furniture

Our schedule for the week:

Friday, June 16 – Kick-off dinner and group assignments

Saturday, June 17 – primary work day, 9am – 3pm

Monday thru Thursday – additional work assignments

Thursday, June 22 – closing celebration

The best part of this design is that volunteers don't have to commit to working every day or for large blocks of time. You can pick the tasks which interest you the most and may participate as much or as little as your time allows. With a few exceptions, most projects will be limited to a 2 hour block of time. Each work group will consist of 3-4 volunteers.

Who can participate? ***Absolutely everyone!*** All ages are welcome as well as friends, family and neighbors. We would love to see a variety of churches and organizations represented.

For questions or more information, feel free to contact either: Beverly Pugh (project coordinator) at puchbs@gmail.com or Phil Myers (pastor of FRUCC) at pmyers8084@gmail.com

For planning purposes, please sign up with one of these contacts no later than **June 1st**.

INTERESTED IN A TRIP TO THE HOLY LAND?

A UCC group is forming to make this journey at the end of December. For more information go to: <https://www.mejditours.com/open-tour/a-stillspeaking-journey-through-the-holy-land/>

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ART GALLERY TRANSITION

Many thanks to Anna Gerow for sharing her wonderful collection of art in May, especially those mesmerizing butterflies! As we turn the page on the calendar to June, Dotti Davis is our new “artist in residence.” Rather than paintings on canvas, however, Dotti’s art is on plates! And looking down the road to July, Ken Little has plans for a special display. Check it out on the walkway between our Education Building and the sanctuary.

WOMEN OF THE SOUTHERN CONFERENCE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

It is my pleasure and privilege to call all the Church Women of the Southern Conference to come together for our 2017 Annual Conference.

We will be gathering on Friday, June 16 and Saturday, June 17, 2017 at Black Lake Conference Center in Asheboro, North Carolina. Our lodging will be at the Holiday Inn Express & Suites in Asheboro.

The theme for our Conference will be “Cloud of Witnesses.” The Scripture text will be from Hebrews 12.

Let us come and celebrate our time together as United Church of Christ Women, believing in an awesome God that is still a speaking God. It will be nice to get away from the news and busyness of our daily routines and enjoy each other’s fellowship. As we gather, may our love for each other and our praise of God help us to be encouraged, inspired and bring us closer to God in our faith journey.

We hope you will invite your friends to join us as we praise God together! Come, we will be expecting you!

Peace and Love,
Betty Griffin, CWSC President
(336) 260-2866

WOMEN’S FELLOWSHIP NEWS

There are no Women’s Fellowship meetings planned for June and July. The next meeting of the Women’s Fellowship will be a joint meeting on Monday, August 7th at 6:00 pm in the Bray Fellowship Hall.