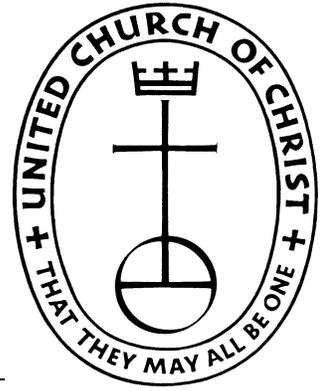


First Christian United Church of Christ Newsletter February 2019



First Christian's celebrate a bitter-sweet goodbye with Rev. Mark Pickett as he retires.

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OUR MINISTRY CELEBRATED

On January 27th, Mark Pickett led his final service as Pastor of First Christian before retiring. Mark first came to the church in the fall of 2007 for a four-month period. Mark Nanny had taken an emergency medical leave of absence and Mark Pickett was asked to fill in. But when Rev. Nanny was unable to return, the congregation tapped Scott Comrie for pastoral leadership after that four months. Scott served in that capacity for a year and a half. It was after Rev. Comrie departed that Mark returned in the summer of 2009.

As a part of the service on the 27th, there was a special “Time of Farwell” liturgy that was led by the Rev. Eddie Weathers of the Eastern NC Association. As a part of the ceremony, both pastor and church released each other from those pastoral bonds while promising to pray for each other, encouraging each other as both move into the future, trusting in God’s strength and guidance.

An interim search committee has been formed by the Board of Deacons. While they carry out their work, the Rev. Jamie Fonville has agreed to lead worship and provide pastoral care until an interim is hired.

In the meantime, the Pastoral Search Committee has already met with Rev. Weathers, our association placement officer. Ken Little was elected chair of the committee and Mack Painter has agreed to serve as secretary. At the congregational meeting following worship on February 3rd, the committee will be officially installed.

Following the service on the 27th, the Board of Deacons hosted a catered luncheon in celebration of Mark’s ministry.

While there was a sense of sadness as Mark departs, there was also a sense of appreciation for his work among us these past years. Mark and Margot anticipate selling their home in Durham and looking for a new one close to their daughter and her family in Colorado. With a special-needs grandson, their presence will help provide support and care for Asher. And, as Jamie Fonville put it, they will continue their ministry out west, it will just be a different kind of ministry.

We ask for God’s blessing upon them as they make this move.

ANNUAL MEETING – FEBRUARY 3RD

Immediately following worship on February 3rd, the church’s Annual Congregational Meeting will be held. Agenda items include: adoption of the annual report; instillation of church officers, board and committee members, including the Pastoral Search Committee; and a brief memorial service honoring church members who passed away in 2018.

NEW PASTOR’S EMAIL ADDRESS

With Mark’s retirement, a new email address has been created for corresponding with future interim or settled pastors. If you would like to be in touch by email, write:

pastor@firstchristianucc.org

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SANCTUARY LIGHTING

Following our Turkey Day festivities, a cake auction was held, sponsored by the Board of Deacons, to raise funds to repair lights in the ceiling of the sanctuary. The lights above the choir loft and in front of the pulpit had burned out. Some ceiling lights can be accessed from the “crawl space” above the ceiling, but those particular burned out lights could not. As the ceiling in the sanctuary is very high, this presented a problem that called for professional help.

In all, over \$2900 was raised by the auction. Through the persistent leadership of Keith Miller, King Electric came and made the repairs (see picture) The lights are all on now and things are much brighter in the sanctuary. Thanks to all who helped to make the auction such a success!

The good news is that the bill for those repairs was much less than what was raised by the auction, it has been decided to transfer the remaining amount to the Deacons’ Fund. Because investments in 2018 were down, there were no new funds available to the deacons this year. The infusion of these “bonus” funds will go a long way towards helping enable the deacons’ ministry in 2019.

In addition, because of meager investment returns last year, there were no new benevolence dollars available to the church beyond our special offerings and

budgeted OCWM giving. It should be noted, however, that in 2018 our non-budgeted benevolences totaled over 21,000! However, because of the lack of funding in 2019 from the Mission Endowment Fund, the Finance Committee will be recommending to the Official Board that \$2000 be set aside from the Memorial Fund in support of local benevolences. The Memorial Fund is the repository of any non-designated gifts given to the church in memory of loved ones who have died.



SUPPER CLUB – FEBRUARY 5TH

The Supper Club tradition continues on Tuesday, February 5th. That evening gather at Kimber’s Restaurant in Gibsonville for an evening of good food and fellowship. Please note, to take advantage of the early bird specials, you need to be seated by 5:45pm To make reservations, call Eleanor Lovgren no later than 8pm on Thursday, January 31st.

First Christian UCC – February 2019 Newsletter **HELP KEEP US CURRENT WITH NEWS AND PRAYER** **CONCERNS**

With Mark's retirement it will be important for individual members to keep the church office posted on any important church news or prayer concerns. For the time being, Joan will take on the responsibility for the publication of Wednesday Musings each week. However, Joan won't know what to publish unless we keep her informed. The phone number of the church office is 336-226-7428. Joan welcomes your calls!

USE OF PARKING LOT EXPANDS OUR MISSIONS

Have you noticed anything different in the parking lot behind the sanctuary? The obvious thing are the new metal curb ramps. Beyond that, you'll notice a graveled drive going behind the small brick building on the corner of Davis and Fisher. This building is owned by Blessed Sacrament Roman Catholic Church and, over the past several months, they've been doing some renovations. The front part of the building is being used to house the offices of their social service programs. The back portion of the building has been modified to accommodate a food pantry.

Several weeks ago, Blessed Sacrament approached us to ask if they could use our parking lot as a pass-through to their pantry. The pantry is open one Monday morning and one Saturday morning a month. Cars would enter our parking lot from Maple Street, then go over the curb, drive behind their building where groceries will be loaded into their vehicles. They will exit onto Fisher Street.

A memorandum of understanding was negotiated and signed by both churches. No heavy vehicles may pass through this area. The agreement can be terminated at any time, and arrangements will be made for other access to this area if we have a funeral or other special service. However, with Allied Churches no longer supporting a food pantry, helping a sister church in this small way not only helps fill an important community need, it expands our own ministry without an additional strain on the budget.

CAN YOU HELP WITH RECEPTIONS?

As we move deeper into the new year. There is a need for folks to sign-up to help with receptions follow worship. You'll find a new sign-up sheet for our receptions is in the Sellars Parlor. As you know, there is no reception following worship the first Sunday of each month, but other weeks are open. If you can help on a regular basis, or even on an occasional basis throughout the year, your efforts are greatly appreciated. This time of fellowship after worship has become a special time for us as a church. Please help it continue.

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MANY, MANY THANKS

As you know, the 27th was my last Sunday among you. It was a good service with wonderful music from Matt and the choir, and we were blessed to have the Rev. Eddie Weathers participate in the service from the Southern Conference.

There was the meal that followed sponsored by the Board of Deacons. Ted Wheeler knocked himself out with a great meal. There were your gifts! The framed picture of the church which all of you signed will be a constant reminder of the special people here at First Christian. And the picture of the church is easily my favorite. Then, there was the memory box filled with so many treasured memories of our work together. It was a simple box, but it was filled with many blessings. Finally, there was your amazingly generous gift. Thank you to one and all. We're not quite sure what we'll do with it yet, but rest assured, it will be something special!

Of course, it was a day of mixed emotions. Margot and I are excited for what retirement may hold, especially as it will include a move out west. But there is also a sense of loss. You have been a special church filled with wonderful people. Our time together will always hold a special place in my heart.

So, thank you for Sunday and your amazing gifts, but even more, thank you for being a church that has been a joy to serve.

Mark

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Year to Date through 12-31-18

	Actual	Budget
Income:	\$206,742.36	\$202,423.00
<u>Expense</u>	<u>\$195,525.54</u>	<u>\$202,423.00</u>
Net Balance:	\$11,216.82	\$0
Balance in Checking 11-30-18		\$20,638.24

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