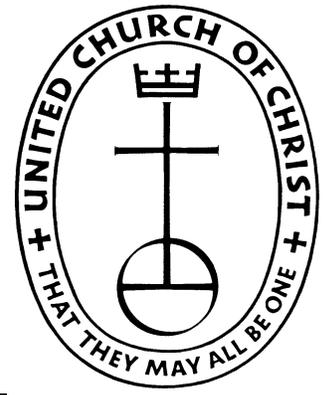




**First Christian  
United Church of Christ  
Newsletter  
May 2017**

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*Make plans to come out and enjoy a great meal  
and wonderful entertainment by  
“The Cornpickers”  
on May 12<sup>th</sup> at our  
Annual Spaghetti Dinner  
fundraiser.*

# First Christian UCC – May 2017 Newsletter

## PASTOR'S COLUMN

With my Sabbatical leave quickly approaching I want to start today by saying a big “thank you” to the entire church for helping to make this happen. A year ago I was busy completing a sabbatical grant application through the Lilly Endowment. When I received word that my proposal had been rejected, it was very discouraging. Lilly grants are very generous and getting one would have opened a world of possibilities for both me and the church.

But we were able to change gears and make a revised version of this plan work anyway. At it's April meeting, the Official Board voted to extend to Beth Kennett the invitation to serve as our interim minister this summer while I'll be away. Beth's first Sunday will be June 4<sup>th</sup> and her last Sunday with us will be on September 3<sup>rd</sup>. With the Lilly grant we would have been able to hire a ¾ time interim, but Beth would not have been available for such a position because of her primary work responsibilities at the Center for Congregational Health. (See accompanying article) As it is, Beth will be with us for a little more than one day a week. During this time, the Board of Deacons will continue their strong leadership and others will step up to fill the gaps. My hope is that, being away over the summer, it will be a quieter time around church. But if an issue or crisis should arise, Beth will provide a steady hand. In addition, she already knows our church and many of the people in it. She will not be starting from “square one.” I have every confidence that the church will be in good hands while I am gone.

In addition, there has been some creative thinking that has already occurred. There will be two Sundays during the summer when Beth will not be able to be here because of prior commitments. At a recent deacons meeting it was suggested that, rather than having pulpit supply on those dates, the church could hold a “Lay Sunday” for one week and perhaps another, “Story Behind the Hymns” Sunday, for the other.

On my side of the sabbatical, things have needed to be scaled back as well. With the Lilly grant, Margot and I were hoping that our family could travel with us for a significant portion of our time away. Without the grant, that won't be possible, so we'll travel to see them instead. At this point, Margot and I plan to start out with a little over two weeks spent in parts of Italy and France. Then, we'll come home, do laundry and head west. On our way to Colorado to see our grandkids and their parents, we plan to go to Indiana and spend some time visiting Margot's brother and sister and their families.

After several weeks in Colorado, Margot and I will head north and visit several National Parks before coming home. Before it all ends, we are planning on getting out to the beach for a couple of weeks.

If this sounds like a non-traditional sabbatical – it is. That was one of the take aways from the Lilly grant process. If a pastor was planning to work on a degree program for their sabbatical, the Lilly Endowment wouldn't fund it. Their focus was on what nurtured the heart and soul of a pastor – that's what they were willing to support and fund. They encouraged travel and time spent with family and the creative side of a person's life. Originally, I had hoped to design and craft a stained-glass window as a part of this sabbatical. Well, that part will have to wait for another time. Right now, I am excited by what lies ahead. And after many years of ministry I am very much looking forward to a pause in order to be refreshed and renewed and energized to serve anew.

Thank you for this gift. It is very special. I will treasure it always!

*Mark*

# **First Christian UCC – May 2017 Newsletter**

## **WELCOME BETH KENNETT**

As Mark begins his sabbatical at the end of the month, First Christian prepares to welcome back an old friend, Beth Kennett, as our interim pastor. Beth and her husband, Jay, are residents of Burlington, and Beth served as our Associate Pastor from 1994-1998 with primary responsibilities in Christian Education and family ministries.

After her work at First Christian, she served on the staff of the Southern Conference as an Associate Conference Minister for the Eastern North Carolina Association. From 2005 – 2011, she moved to the Center for Congregational Health at Wake Forest University Medical Center in Winston-Salem.

At the Center, she coordinates coaching and consulting services for clergy around professional, leadership and personal issues. She also consults with local churches in areas of conflict, team development, strategic planning and other congregational health matters. Beth is also part of the team that does interim training at the Center. In addition, she has done some teaching at Wake Forest University Divinity School and helps supervise and mentor interns.

Her first Sunday will be Pentecost Sunday, June 4<sup>th</sup> and she will remain through Labor Day Sunday, September 4<sup>th</sup>.

## **SPAGHETTI SUPPER – MAY 12<sup>TH</sup>**

Our Annual Spaghetti Supper is scheduled for May 12<sup>th</sup>, mark your calendar and join us for a delicious meal and great entertainment. Once more, our Board of Deacons will be joining the Alamance Council for the Blind to sponsor this event. The proceeds will be divided between the two.

Meals will be served between 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm. Take-out meals will also be available. “The Cornpickers” have once more volunteered their services for entertainment. They will begin playing at 6:30 p.m.

Tickets are available through any Deacon, or they can be purchased at the door. The cost for this delicious meal with homemade desserts is only \$8.00. Children 12 years and younger eat free! You won't find better food at a better price – and it's all for a worthy cause!

Also, members of the Council for the Blind plan to join us for worship the Sunday before the supper on May 7<sup>th</sup>.

## **HOT DOG LUNCH AND CAKE AUCTION**

May will be a busy “food month” at First Christian, and all of it will be good. In addition to the Spaghetti Supper, we will hold our annual Hot Dog Lunch and Cake Auction on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Following worship that day, plan to stay. Come down to the Bray Fellowship Hall for the hot dog lunch and cake auction. Of course, there will be more than just cakes up for bid, although there will be a wide variety of those to choose from. But look for pies, home-baked breads, and banana pudding as well! All proceeds go to support the research efforts of the American Cancer Society through the Relay for Life.

Don't just plan to come. Invite a friend. And all contributions of cakes and other auction items are always welcomed. And it's a really fun time too!

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## **THE SUPPER CLUB – NEXT GATHERING**

The Supper Club's next gathering will be on May 2nd at 6:00 pm at Fat Frogg Grille, 2009 Timberline Station, Elon, (small shopping center on Haggard Avenue). To make a reservation, please call Eleanor Lovgren at 226-2671 by April 27<sup>th</sup> no later than 8:00 pm. All are welcomed. Everyone pays their own bills. Invite a friend!

## **MARK AWAY**

May 14<sup>th</sup> will be Margot Pickett's last Sunday at the First Congregational Church in Ashville. Mark is planning to take that next week off in order to help her move home. Unfortunately, folks at the church won't see her right away since she will be leaving the following weekend to lead a delegation of pastors from the Southern Conference on a two-week visit to Germany hosted by our partner church, the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland.

If any pastoral emergencies should arise in Mark's absence, please contact Eleanor Lovgren, chair of the Board of Deacons, at 336-226-2671.

Mark will return to the church office on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## **CARRIE MCLEAN TAYLOR SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

The following criteria may be relevant to one or more students:

1. The individual must be a faithful member of the First Christian United Church of Christ for at least two years and be actively involved in Church and community activities.
2. The individual must be a high school graduate or college student who has a financial need.
3. The individual is sincere in graduating from a college, university, community college or seminary. Awards will not be given for post graduate studies except for seminary.
4. The individual must complete an application before being considered as a recipient of a scholarship gift, and may reapply for additional gifts on a year-to-year basis.

**Interested students should see the church website ([firstchristianucc.org](http://firstchristianucc.org)) or contact the church office for an application form. The deadline is June 15, 2017.**

## **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS**

The Margaret Lightbourne Circle will meet Monday, May 8th in the church conference room at 1:30 pm. Members will be studying the Book of Matthew in the month of April and May, and are asked to bring their Bibles.

# First Christian UCC – May 2017 Newsletter

## RECORDED SERVICES RETURN

As you may know, for years we have recorded our Sunday morning worship services and posted them for downloading on our web site, [www.firstchristianucc.org](http://www.firstchristianucc.org). Unfortunately, because of some technical issues, recording were not available for several weeks at the start of this spring. Those issues have now been resolved and our services are once again being posted.

The good news in all of this is that people noticed. Making our Sunday morning services available is an easy service to provide on our web site, but we weren't sure how much it was being used. Now we know!

If you are away on vacation or home sick and wonder, "What happened on Sunday," go to our web site and find out. And many thanks to Ken Pipes who records our services, and our secretary, Joan Paschal, who each week uploads them to the web. Copies on disc can also be obtained in our church office. Please call ahead and reserve a copy if you have a need for one.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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

- Mother's Day – May 14<sup>th</sup>
- Bingo Night – June 7<sup>th</sup>
- Deadline for applications for the Carrie McLean Taylor Scholarship Fund (available on our web site along with the guidelines) – June 15<sup>th</sup>
- Deadline for contributions to contribute to Matt Rice's mission trip fund – June 15<sup>th</sup>
- Father's Day – June 18<sup>th</sup>

## MAY FRIENDSHIP DAY

"Kindling New Fires of Peace, Love and Hope" is the theme for this Spring's May Friendship Day. This event, sponsored by Church Women United will be held at the Terrace Restaurant at Twin Lakes on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Check-in is at 11:45, the lunch and program will begin at noon. The cost is \$11.00. All registrations must be paid in advance. Mail your registration and check to Judy Springer, 3831 Wade Coble Dr., Burlington, NC, 27215

Church Women United is an active, ecumenical, inter-racial group of women from churches throughout our area. All are welcomed.

### CWU Burlington and Alamance County May Friendship Day Reservation Form

<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone &amp;/or Email Address</u>	<u>Church</u>	<u>Check # &amp; Amount</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

# **First Christian UCC – May 2017 Newsletter**

## **MAY IN THE ART GALLERY**

The hallway between our Education Building and the sanctuary, now known as our art gallery, has been a successful venture at First Christian. We have been blessed with many beautiful works of art from our church family! Stop by for a visit.

### **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

**Year to Date through 03-31-17**

	Actual	Budget
Income:	\$32,495.40	\$50,074.75
<u>Expense</u>	<u>\$47,242.41</u>	<u>\$50,074.63</u>
Net Balance: <\$14,747.01>		\$ .12

Balance in Checking 03-31-17 \$7,711.43

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