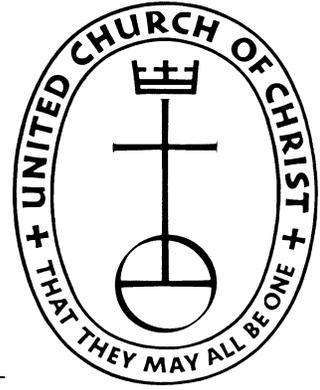




**First Christian
United Church of Christ
Newsletter
September 2018**



*Make plans to join us for our
125th Anniversary Homecoming Sunday
Celebration on September 16th.
A special worship service will begin at 10:30
am, followed by lunch in the Bray Hall.*

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PASTOR’S COLUMN

Homecoming. It’s something that many churches do every year. It has a long tradition here at First Christian, either by that same name or “Rally Day” as it was called in the past. It’s a time for former members to return to their spiritual home. And it is a time for the present church to stop and remember, even as we prepare to move into the future.

Sometimes Homecoming is celebrated with a meal, at other times, like our 125th anniversary celebration this year, much more is involved. (See elsewhere in this newsletter for a full list of activities and events.) But the concept of “Homecoming” is much more than a yearly church party.,

“Coming home” is something that is deeply emotional and even spiritual for many people. Not all grew up in a happy, nurturing home, but for those who did, coming home brings back a flood of vivid memories – games that were played with friends in the backyard, the smells of dinner cooking on the stove, friends and relatives gathering around a brightly lit tree during the Christmas season, a parent’s hand that steadied a bike as you learned to ride, and that same hand tending to a scraped knee if you fell!

I’m reminded of the old television show “Cheers” from years ago. “Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name, and they’re always glad you came.” That was the song that started the show each week, but it also captures the spirit of homecoming as well.

When I left home to go away to college and seminary, then get a job, get married and start a family, there was something powerful about knowing there was always a place I could go to where I would be loved and welcomed no matter what storms might rage in the world beyond. Sometimes it’s with an adopted family, other times it might be with a community of people that would stand by you no matter what.

When the church is at its best, that’s when it’s like a spiritual “home.” First Christian has been that home for many over the years. And in a world where many have been abused or rejected by the church, First Christian stands as a witness to what the church should be. In recent news, we’ve heard the report of how over 1000 children were abused in churches in Pennsylvania over several decades. But the sad thing is that this has happened, not just in Pennsylvania and not just in Catholic churches, but in many other churches far and wide. Abuse of trust and power by authority figures unfortunately has a long history and there are many who have given up on the church entirely because of it. That is why it’s so important for churches like First Christian to reach out with acceptance and love to those who are lost and searching, and to be a voice for justice for those who have known too little. If we can be a spiritual home like that, our witness can be powerful and we will be a home that people will rejoice to return to.

On September 16th there will be many memories for us to share, good food to enjoy, games to play and opportunities to see old friends. This year’s Homecoming promises to be something special. But beyond it all is a call by our merciful, gracious and loving God. When our time here on earth is done, there is an ultimate home to which we are invited where we will be united with all God’s saints. We will come from the north, south, east and west and gather around a banquet table that overflows with goodness. That will be a remarkable “homecoming” indeed!

Mark

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HOMECOMING - SEPTEMBER 16TH, 2018

First Christian Church Homecoming 2018 is our 125th birthday. In 1893 our church forefathers completed building our very first church on the SE corner of Church and Davis Streets. In remembrance and in celebration, September 16th will be a thankful and joyful day for us. We look forward to having former members, friends, and extended families join us for this special occasion beginning with a welcoming reception in the Church Parlor at 9:30 am. The Homecoming Worship Service at 10:30 am will feature inspirational messages and uplifting music in tribute to our treasured past. The service will also include a special ceremony to recognize members who passed away five, ten and fifteen years ago, as well as those who have died since our last Homecoming celebration. A picnic lunch will be enjoyed in the Bray Fellowship Hall after the service, followed by Ice Cream Desserts and Games on the back lawn. The Deacons will provide meats, drinks and desserts. To contribute to this meal, please bring generous portions of “ready to eat” side dishes that do not require heating. Salad options are welcomed as well. There will be outside activities for children and adults, an exciting Hat Parade, and seats in the shade for observing in comfort. Please bring lawn chairs as well as “sun tents” (if you have them) for extra shade beside the trees.

In preparation for Homecoming, there will be a work day beginning at 9:00 am on September 8th. Work will primary focus on the play area behind the church. In case of rain, the work day will be the following Saturday, the 15th.

\Plan to come and stay a while, and then come back!

HOMECOMING T-SHIRTS

The last chance to order homecoming t-shirts will be Sunday, September 2nd. Sample shirts with an order form are on display in the church library. All shirts will be printed with our special Homecoming logo and are \$10 each. The shirts will be available for pick-up on Sunday, September 9th. See Merle Sharpe if you need more information.

LAY SUNDAY – WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP PLAN?

Traditionally, the third Sunday in October has been our Family Day service, a service when the young people of our church have stepped forward. This year however, we plan to expand that circle for a Lay Sunday celebration. Not only will young people be included, but others as will. And, in order to make this service as inclusive as possible, we are inviting all who are interested to join in the planning of this event.

Following worship on the 23rd we'll gather in the Bray Fellowship Hall, offer some pizzas and share our ideas. What would you like to see in a Lay Sunday service? Would you like to participate yourself or are there others that you could encourage to participate? The 23rd will be a brainstorming session for sharing ideas. And if we can't incorporate them all into one service on October 21st, we'll save them for services later in the church's program year.

Come and join us. And if you are interested but will be out of town that day, call the church office (336-226-7428) and let us know your interest.

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WHAT SHALL WE BRING?

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, while 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 2019.

The theme for our stewardship reflection is "What Shall We Bring?". 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 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 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.

As we each consider "What Shall We Bring?" in response to God's blessings to us may one of our goals be to help God accomplish God's desire of having life become better around us. As we reflect upon the ways God has been good to us, may we then give through our many talents, opportunities, and possessions to help God make life on earth more like life will be found in the kingdom of heaven.

Why do you have the gift of life? 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? "What Shall You Bring?" to the Lord?

Jamie Fonville for Board of Finance

MISSION TRIP REPORT

September will be a special month in the life of the church not only because of Homecoming, but on the 30th, Matt Rice and Dotti Davis will make a report on their mission trip to Uganda. On this Sunday, things will begin during education hour. Beginning at 9:30 am in the Bray Fellowship Hall they will share videos, pictures and stories. Then, during worship, we'll sing an African hymn and the choir will add little "soul" to our service with an African anthem. Then Dotti and Matt will continue to share tales of their spiritual adventure in Africa. Finally, for the reception following worship, we will share some African food. From beginning to end it promises to be a memorable day.

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SUPPER CLUB – SEPTEMBER 4TH

Every time that the Supper Club meets, it's a great time of fun and fellowship! Many have participated in the gatherings and all have had a wonderful time. The next event will be meeting at "It's All Good", 2306-C South Church Street at 6:00 pm. Please call Eleanor Lovgren (336– 226-2671) by Thursday, August 30th to make your reservation.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP CIRCLES

The Margaret Lightbourne Women's Circle will meet on Monday, September 10th at 1:30 pm in the conference room. The date moved from the normal "first Monday" date due to the Labor Day Holiday. All members are urged to bring dry and canned goods on the first Sunday of the month for the Allied Churches food pantry collection. Collection barrels are located in the Bray Fellowship Hall.

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:

- September 2nd Homecoming Committee Meeting
- September 4 Supper Club
- September 16 Homecoming
- September 30 Mission Trip Presentation

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Year to Date through 06-30-18

	Actual	Budget
Income:	\$122,311.28	\$101,211.54
<u>Expense</u>	<u>\$99,444.29</u>	<u>\$101,101.94</u>
Net Balance:	\$22,866.29	\$ 109.60
Balance in Checking 06-30-18		\$27,792.34

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