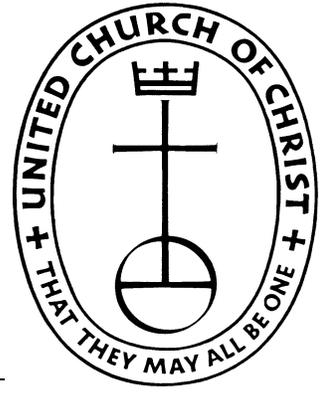


First Christian United Church of Christ Newsletter October 2018



Homecoming 2018

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PASTOR’S COLUMN

September certainly was an eventful month in all our lives. When we started making plans for our 125th anniversary, it never crossed anyone’s mind to think of hurricanes – but that didn’t stop Florence! And when she arrived, she wouldn’t go away. This had to have been one of the slowest moving storms in history. The winds were not the problem, it was the rain and storm surge that wreaked havoc. In Wilmington area they had 40 inches of rain. Storm surges inundated New Bern, and the hurricane didn’t even come over them! We learned that classes at UNC W will not resume till October 8th at the earliest because of storm damage. Added to all this misery is the fact that many along the coast had not fully recovered from the flood waters of Hurricane Matthew two years ago. Florence, in essence, was the second of a double blow.

Still, as bad as this storm was, it pales in comparison to the devastation wreaked by Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico one year ago. To date, 36 in North Carolina lost their lives because of Florence. Nearly 3000 lost their lives in Puerto Rico. At the height of the storm here, some 900,000 homes were without power. But because repair crews came from across the country to help, power was restored in a relatively short period of time. Many parts of Puerto Rico were without power for a year! It’s hard to image.

We all need to keep the victims of Florence in our prayers. It will be a very long process of recovery for so many people. And please see an article elsewhere in this newsletter that will tell you ways that you can help in a tangible way. But let us also continue to keep the people of Puerto Rico in prayer. They are on an island far removed from our daily lives. It’s easy to forget them, but they need our on-going prayers just as much.

And perhaps it is time for all of us to declare that climate change is real and support public policy that will defend our environmental future. Hurricanes Harvey, Maria and Florence were not caused by climate change, but they became far more destructive and deadly because of it. As someone recently observed thinking of our two most recent storms, “If you have two 500-year storms in two years, they’re not 500-year storms!”

This world is a precious gift that has been given to us by God. It is time we stop neglecting it and begin to treat as the gift that it is.

As we look to the weeks and months ahead, First Christian will be a busy time with many wonderful service and activities. Yet, as we look ahead, let us also look back and do what we can to help those who suffer in the wake of these storms. And, as we face new storms in the years ahead, both physical as well as spiritual, may we find our strength both from God as well as each other. Blessings on you all!

Mark

SUPPER CLUB – OCTOBER 2ND

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 Kimber’s in Gibsonville at 5:45 pm. Note the earlier time, this enables us to take advantage of the early bird menu.

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DISASTER RELIEF OFFERING ONGOING

On our Homecoming Sunday, we collected some \$450 for disaster relief efforts following Hurricane Florence. Because a number of people were out of town on this date and others had not brought their checkbooks with them to worship, we will continue collecting funds for the first several weeks of October.

At this point, we have been told that what is needed most are “Clean Up Kits,” 5-gallon buckets filled with various cleaning supplies. Our plan is to join with other area UCC churches, pool our funds to purchase supplies, then have a day to assemble the buckets.

We will keep you posted on developments. If you would like to contribute your labor or money, or both, it’s not too late. Make checks payable to the church. Write “disaster relief” on the memo line. Or to volunteer, call or email the church office.

HOME COMING

In many ways, Homecoming became much more eventful than we ever imagined. Scheduled for September 16th, when Hurricane Florence rolled in, we delayed our celebration one week. Then, the week before the 23rd, our elevator broke. Without the use of the elevator, the sanctuary became inaccessible to many of our members, so we held all of our activities in the Bray Fellowship Hall. Things started out at 9:30 am with a reception coordinated by Helen Little. Afterwards, we gathered for worship, some sitting in rows of chairs, others around tables that had been decorated for the meal to follow. We expected a drop-off in attendance because of the change in date, but as our service began, the room began to fill. In all, some 90 people were in attendance.

During our service, we recognized 24 former members with the ringing of a chime and the lighting of a candle. Then came a time for sharing memories from our 125-year past. Nancey Simmons got us started with a wonderful summary of our early history. This was followed by a flood of memories as the microphone was passed to all who wanted to share.

Mary Newsome and Phil Bray coordinated our meal offerings of ham and chicken which were complemented by a bounty of side dishes. Harvey and Merle Sharpe completed the feast with a wide selection of ice creams.

Then, there was the “hat parade”, a whimsical and wonderful parade of colorful people, not only in exotic hats but also in period costumes. And many others wore our specially made 125th anniversary shirts (although, they didn’t parade).

Despite a broken elevator and a hurricane delayed date, it was a magical time. Mark and Cathy Andes were even able to travel from their new home near Charlotte to join us on this special date.

Many thanks to all who worked so hard to make this day a reality, but special thanks go to Merle Sharpe whose idea this was in the first place and who coordinated all of our efforts as the chair of our organizing committee.

And many thanks to Keith Miller who spearheaded a process to get our elevator running again!

MARGARET LIGHTBOURNE CIRCLE NEWS

The October meeting of the Margaret Lightbourne Circle has been cancelled. The next meeting will be November 5th at 1:30 in the church conference room.

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OUTREACH – ANIMAL SHELTER

Does your linen closet need to be cleaned out? The Deacon's Mission sub-committee has an idea of how to dispose of all those old towels, washcloths, sheets, pillowcases, pillows and blankets. Donate them to the Alamance County Animal Shelter. The Shelter can use any soft items for bedding for the doggies and kitties. The items can be stained or even have holes and tears, but **MUST BE CLEAN!** Place the items in the box marked "Animal Shelter Bedding" near the Missions table in Bray Fellowship Hall during the month of October. (If your bedding still has some use for humans, we recommend that you donate those items to a local charitable thrift store of your choice). The doggies and kitties will appreciate the comfy bedding while they wait to be adopted for their "forever home"!

THANK YOU

Dear First Christians,

Greetings from the Big Apple! I am writing to thank the First Christian UCC community for the beautiful bible that I was graciously given for graduation. I am also very grateful for the scholarship money that I received. The money has gone towards books, school supplies and a reading lamp for late night studying. The First Christian UCC community means so much to me and I cannot wait to see you all again soon. I pray that everyone is full of love and peace. Thank you all.

With love, Sarah Morgan Davis

P.S. If anyone has questions or would like to chat about my time at Union Theological Seminary, my email is: sd3237@UTSnyc.edu

And my address is: 99 Claremont Ave., Apt. 122, New Your, NY, 10027

A special thanks to Matt Rice for the gift of an addition to our organ- a Zimbelstern. Listen for a sweet tinkling sound coming from the upper part of our organ pipe alcove. Thank you, Matt, for this very generous gift..

LAITY SUNDAY/CAKE AUCTION – OCTOBER 21ST

October 21st will be a full day at First Christian, we will have two special events. Our worship service has been designated as Laity Sunday and we hope to involve a number of you in our service. In particular, we are looking for help in two ways. What are hymns or scripture passages that have been important and meaningful in your life? Would you share them with us and would you be willing to say a brief word during the service about why they have been meaningful to you? Please fill out the form at the end of this newsletter (you will also find it in upcoming bulletins) and return it to the church office or drop it in the offering plate on Sunday. The deadline for these forms will be October 14th.

Following worship that day, the Deacons will be sponsoring a hot dog lunch and cake

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and pie auction. Get your desserts for the holiday season early, put them in the freezer and you won't have to worry about holiday treats later. Or you can even eat them now!

Proceeds from the auction will go to repair the spotlight that are out in our sanctuary's ceiling. On cloudy days it can be dim, especially the lighting over the choir and pulpit. If you can bring a cake or pie to be auctioned, wrap it thoroughly for freezing and bring it on the 21st. Then come to the service and lunch, and bring your check book too.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY – OCTOBER 7TH

Our stewardship mailing went out, now we hope you will bring your pledge cards back. October 7th is the date for our Stewardship Sunday when we dedicate our pledges of support for the ministry of the church in the coming year. Once all pledges have been compiled, the Official Board will finalize our proposed 2019 budget. The congregation will take action on the budget at a congregational meeting following worship on December 9th.

October 7th will also be World Communion Sunday when we celebrate the world-wide reach of the ministry of the church of Jesus Christ. Look for a variety of breads from around the world on the plates as they are passed. And being a Communion Sunday, please remember to bring dried and canned foods for the food pantry at Allied Churches.

IT'S TIME TO ORDER CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

It's hard to believe but the season of Advent is just around the corner. As a result, we will start taking orders for poinsettias to decorate our sanctuary starting October 28th. Look for order forms in your bulletin on that date or call the church office closer to that time.

NEW DIRECTORIES

As we move to the end of 2018, in the church office we are starting to prepare for publication of a new directory. Thank you for the additions and corrections you have provided us during the course of this year. An accurate directory is an essential tool in the life of the church. Yet, in recent weeks we have discovered that we don't always have the latest information.

Have you changed phones and have a new number? Have you gotten a new email address? Please look over your current information and let us know of any changes or errors. Please notify us by October 28th. And thank you.

ENCA TO MEET IN DURHAM

October 13th will be the date of the annual meeting of the Eastern North Carolina Association of the Southern Conference. The meeting will be held this year at Pilgrim United Church of Christ in Durham. The meeting will begin at 9:00 am and run through lunch. Both Mark and the Fonvilles will be representing First Christian, but visitors are welcomed as well. For more information, call the church office.

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FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Year to Date through 08-31-18

	Actual	Budget
Income:	\$142,974.49	\$134,948.72
Expense	<u>\$130,504.39</u>	<u>\$134,875.92</u>
Net Balance:	\$12,470.10	\$ 72.80
Balance in Checking 08-31-18		\$19,525.49

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

MEETINGS RESCHEDULED

In order to accommodate necessary action on the 2019 budget, the Finance Committee has adjusted it's schedule. There will be no meeting the third Tuesday of October or November. Instead, the Committee will meet on Thursday, November 1st at 2:00 pm in the Conference Room. At that meeting, the Committee expects to approve a final proposed 2019 budget for action at the Official Board meeting on November 11th.

Because of members being out of town, the October Official Board Meeting has been cancelled

LOOKING AHEAD

- Turkey Day – November 11th
- Decorate the sanctuary for Advent – December 1st
- First Sunday of Advent and a Moravian Lovefeast Service – December 2nd

LAITY SUNDAY – OCTOBER 21ST

Can you help with Laity Sunday?

What hymn has been most meaningful to you?

Hymn name and number _____

Would you be willing to say a brief word about why this hymn has been meaningful to you during the service? _____

During times of great joy or crisis in your life, has there been a passage that has helped you most? Please list: _____

Would you be willing to briefly speak about this during the service? _____

Name and phone number _____

Please tear off and return to the church office or drop it in the offering plate by October 14th.