

**Message from the Pastor:**

Dear Friends,

As I prayed today in our old meeting house, for guidance to be your pastor, the first words of the Tenth Commandment came to me (or the entire words of the Ninth Commandment, if we follow the numbering used by Lutheran and Roman Catholic congregations): "You shall not covet your neighbor's house!" (Exodus 20:21)

God does not want us to covet even our neighbor's house of worship! Although the grass may sometimes seem greener on the other side of the fence, this congregation is the assembly of the elect, called together by Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and our only real chore is to obey Him, to live together the life of witness to God, by the grace of God. All Christ's congregations serve with us our one Lord, and thus all congregations serve one another, so that each may serve, helpful neighbors.

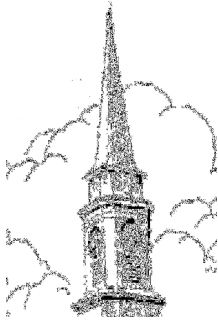
We were asked at Church council by the Pulpit Committee what we were looking for in a pastor. Let me add an answer of my own: "We are looking for someone who will not be looking over the fence, someone who, even in the search and call process, demonstrates a love for us as we now are, the body of Christ gathering at 9050 Church Street, Twinsburg, Ohio, in the year of our Lord 2008, someone who will not feed the covetous desire to have what other congregations have, but rather remind us of our own call to be Christ's own flock." Seek nothing less!

God bless!  
Pastor Jim

**May Friendship Day**



Join the Church Women United for May Friendship Day on Friday, May 2 at the First Congregational Church in Hudson, 47 Aurora Road, Hudson, Ohio. Registration begins at 10:30 a.m. followed with a salad luncheon at 11:30 a.m. Please bring a salad and a friend to share. Child care is available. The theme this year is "God's Wisdom Inspires Hospitality". What does it really mean to provide hospitality as faith-filled women? This theme calls us to look at hospitality from different perspectives. Through sharing scriptures and discussion, it is our hope that all will be called to a deeper understanding of what it truly means to provide hospitality. If you have any questions, please see Marge Roberts.



# Benevolence News . . .

## Women's Fellowship News . . .

SHARING RESOURCES, CHANGING LIVES...is the goal of the 2008 ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING, which will be observed on Sunday, May 4, at First Congregational. Our gifts along with OGHS gifts from other UCC churches and eight other denominations are directed toward improving lives in more than 80 countries by working with local mission partners and with highly effective international ministries such as Church World Service and Action by Churches Together. Of every dollar given to One Great Hour of Sharing for 2006, 92 cents of every dollar was used directly for mission programming.

Giving envelopes are in the pew racks and those persons who took advantage of using the coin banks are encouraged to bring them in on May 4 OR use them for the coming year and return them on OGHS Sunday next year. The offering will be dedicated during worship along with the weekly Sunday offering.

ALL in attendance at worship on May 4 are invited to the annual OGHS "Around the World Coffee Hour" sponsored by the Benevolence Committee following worship.

ALIEN INVADERS, The Plant kind that is... will be the topic of a presentation by Rita Gabrovsek at the day-time Women's Fellowship luncheon on May 1. All are invited to bring a dish to share and join the group for this time of good food, fellowship, and to hear Rita's talk, which will be presented with humor but at the same time addressing a serious environmental concern. President for the month is Mary Lou Sheller, with devotions by Marge Roberts, and Gail Herrilko and Elsie Peel serving as hostesses.

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VERNA EASLEY BAKE SALE - Thanks for the support given the April 6 bake sale, which brought in \$140.19 for the Church Women United Verna Easley Book Fund. College students may apply each semester to this fund for receive financial support (currently \$50. per semester) to help toward the cost of textbooks. In addition, our Women's Fellowship matches the amount for the youth of our church. At this time, seven of our Youth are receiving the funds totaling \$700 this semester. Donations for the Verna Easley fund are always welcomed and may be made through the Women's Fellowship.



### TIS' THE SEASON...

With the coming of spring, it is time for grounds maintenance at the church (as well as at our homes). Cleaning up the church flowerbeds and trimming the shrubs around the exterior of the church can be done anytime someone can spare a little time during the next few weeks. As in the past, the goal is to have the three flowerbeds planted by Memorial Day, May 26; therefore, depending on the weather forecast, planting will be done during the week on May 19. Any assistance will be greatly appreciated; please see Mary Lou Sheller if you are able to help in any way.



## Graduate Information Needed

The Christian Ed committee is in the process of compiling a list of people that will be graduating this spring or summer from high school, college or post-graduate school, so that we may honor their accomplishments on Christian Ed Sunday, June 8. If you or a family member will be graduating this spring / summer semester or this past fall / winter semester, please submit the name of the graduate, the diploma or degree that was earned, the area of study and future plans to any member of the Christian Education committee, or drop it in the folder to the office.



Summer is just around the corner and we're planning an exciting Vacation Bible School (VBS) adventure for your kids! 'God's BIG BACKYARD' VBS is for everyone between the ages

of 3 and 12. Mark your calendars! The adventure runs from **Monday, June 23, 2008** through **Friday, June 27, 2008** from **6:00 PM to 8:30 PM** each day. Because this year's VBS mission theme centers around community service, we are partnering with The United Service Organization (USO). We will be gathering items to donate for USO care packages that will be sent to the troops, or deployed service members. Look for a complete list of items and a registration form in next month's Tower!

## Youth Group Schedule

May 4—Kickball Game 6—8 p.m. Meet at the Church.

May 18—Bake Sale—after Worship Service in Fellowship Hall

June 1—Car Wash after Worship Service for a donation to Youth Group. Hot dogs, chips and pop will be for sale.

Funds from the car wash and bake sale will help go to offset camp costs.

August 30—Redwood Day in the afternoon.

Sept. 14—Canoeing after Worship Service

## **Lockup Trustee for the month of May - Terri Bissell**

**USED EYE GLASSES, POP TABS, AND SOUP LABELS** continue to be collected and will be processed through Church Women United. All three items may be left on the shelf just inside the church library door.

## **Evening Women's Fellowship**

The Evening Women's Fellowship group will meet on Monday, May 5 at 6:00 p.m. at Mavis Winkles. Everyone is welcome to attend. If you have questions, please see Carol Zenisek.

## Dear church family,

I'm writing to tell you about an exciting opportunity I have to travel to the Dominican Republic for a week with the organization CrossWorld. I am thrilled to join a group from the Lampeter Church of the Brethren in PA, including my college roommate Bekah, to assist CrossWorld staff, Bob and Judy Kay. You may remember my last trip with CrossWorld in 2002 when I traveled to Haiti with a team to assist the Kays. The Kays have since moved to the Dominican Republic and I've been hoping for the opportunity to go there.

Well, this May, exactly six years from the first trip, I will again join the group from PA to work with Bob and Judy in their ministry for another week. This time, we will be in Santiago, Dominican Republic. Several projects during the week will include teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and teaching a kids' club at La Yaguaita Bible church, where Bob and Judy are members. We'll also fix up a room in a community school, soon to open. In addition, we'll participate in a Las Girasolas Haitian meeting, as well as several other projects. I am excited to help the community with their education because I currently work at the University of Chicago on a research project that studies Chicago Public School students and their transition to college. Separate from that, I continue to work with inner-city high school students as a Young Life leader on the southwest side of the city, and so to be able to work with youth in another country is an amazing opportunity.

Aside from the opportunity to serve the members of La Yaguaita, I also have some personal goals for this trip. I'm an active volunteer for the ONE Campaign, which works to eliminate extreme global poverty. Therefore, I'm eager to spend time in an economically deprived country to better understand the struggles of extremely poor countries, which describe both Haiti and the Dominican. Assisting people from both countries will be very rewarding. Moreover, Haitians are treated very poorly in the D.R., so I hope to help them in this community to ensure their safety as they live, worship, and pursue education.

The reason I am sharing this news is that you all were so supportive and enthusiastic about my last trip I thought some of you may enjoy hearing about this one. I also would like to ask you for your prayerful support. I am asking for your prayers for our team that we have a safe and productive trip to the D.R. The group consists of Bekah, Jay, Sharon, Greg, Becky, and me. I am excited to do God's work in this way and I want to be sure that the work is as beneficial to the community as possible. Second, I have prayerfully decided to seek financial support to cover the cost of my trip. If you feel led to support me financially in this work, I would be greatly appreciative and excited to share this experience with you. Your donations will translate into helping many children and adults. At the end of this letter you can find detailed breakdown of the cost of the trip.

Thank you for allowing me to share with you what God has been doing in my life over the past several years. I will continue to lift up First Congregational Church in my prayers and look forward to sharing with you stories about my trip!

Sincerely,

Karen Roddie

( Continued on page 5 )

If you feel led to support me on my trip, first, thank you and I'm thrilled that you want to give towards the work God is doing in the D.R.! Second, to better understand what I need for my trip, here are how the finances of the trip break down:

- \$500 is budgeted for the cost of the flight. (We're all flying out of Newark and we actually found direct flights to Santiago!).
- \$150 ministry fund: CrossWorld asks that each person bring this amount to help support the ministry Bob and Judy are doing at La Yaguita Bible Church. Since resources are scarce there, it is a great privilege to respond to immediate needs that will result in positive long-term effects. For example, the work we do on the school building will no doubt provide education for many children.

The other \$500 is left for food, housing, transportation, and emergency fund (You never expect to need emergency money but when I got sick on my last trip I was thankful to have the extra money to cover the cost of the medicine I desperately needed!). I will be gone a total of 8 days and so this extra \$500 breaks down to about \$63 a day.

**The total cost of the trip is \$1500.**

Donations are tax-exempt and checks can be made out to "Hyde Park Vineyard Church" and in the **memo line** write "**Dominican Republic**". You can send them to my work address and then I will take them all together to the church:

Karen Roddie,  
University of Chicago  
969 E. 60<sup>th</sup> Street  
Chicago, IL 60637

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me. My email is [karen-roddie@gmail.com](mailto:karen-roddie@gmail.com) and my phone number is 773-247-7466.

### Ladies' Spring Tea



562-6773.

You are invited to a **Ladies' Spring Tea** on Saturday, May 3 from 1:30 - 4 p.m. at Christ the King Lutheran Church on Ravenna Road in Twinsburg. The year's theme will be "Trust in the Lord" and will focus on Proverbs 3:5-6. The program will feature special guest, Marilyn Spena. She has helped to coordinate and facilitate the Women's Retreats for the past 15 years. Feel free to bring a friend or relative. Please RSVP to Janet Schiopota at 330-

## From The Church Mouse

Things are looking up at my church lately. It seems that you all do more eating now. And that always makes me happy. My favorite night is Souper Supper night. This month the Women's' Fellowship was showing their stuff. And stuff myself I did. I was going around finishing off what was left in the bowls while everyone was talking. Gail H. was scurrying around d making me a bit nervous but she left me some leftovers.



Then in church last Sunday I was lucky to be sitting in the back where there is anew thing that has something to do with the sound. A girl, I thin k her name is Ariel, was doodling around with the knobs and I could hear from the back when she got finished. I stayed with her but she got up and went to the front to be with the liete kids. Usually when you see kids you see food. But I had to wait for after church to eat. And what did I find? Pudding!!! A bet messy but I hope Dan and Judy do that again.

I do feel sorry for Marge A. She has a bandage on her arm and I think she did some major damage. I hope it all turns out well for her. It has to be hard to get on the choir robe. But she can still sing. Good luck, Marge. The other Marge is still sniffing. I hope she gets well soon too.

Well, keep the food coming. I could use one of those little hats from the Knitwitters too, if you please. Sometimes it gets a bit chilly in the basement.

# Summer Music

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ISSUE 5  
THE TOWER

Can you sing? Play an instrument? Play the piano? If so, your services are needed for the Summer Music. The summer schedule runs from June 15 through September 7. There is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board in the Choir Room. If you need help finding music, or have any questions, please see Chrissy Sterling.

From Lucille Fiorelli—

When I was a child my mother occasionally used the expression, “A little bird told me so.” Pastor Link’s article in the April issue of the Tower wrote that the saying is from Ecclesiastes 10:20 in the Living Bible. I was surprised.

When my sons were little we had a pet parakeet named Pretty Boy who did “talk” some. One day my boys were outdoors, and I could see their reflection in the swing-out windows. Bobby was in some kind of mischief. When I reprimanded him he asked. “How did you know?”

Of course my reply was about that little bird. Bobby’s answer: “Pretty Boy. That blabber mouth!”

Thank you to the congregation for the “bucket” of goodies that were delivered to the office by our own Julie Miller on Administrative Professionals Day. I appreciated it very much. It was full of wonderful treats. Thanks for thinking of me.

Kathy Lessman

## Happy Birthday to:

Jessie Prentice	05/02/08
Cassie Pietrantozzi	05/02/08
Amanda Murphey	05/08/08
Madeline Maynard	05/08/08
Lauren Bissell	05/11/08
Katie Smeallie	05/12/08
Melissa Felixson	05/13/08
Ray Kriedman	05/13/08
Jennifer Prentice	05/13/08
Marian Murphy	05/15/08
Mark Miller	05/19/08
Katie Prentice	05/19/08
Joey Schultz	05/20/08
Kelly Piaser	05/31/08



## In Remembrance of -

**FREDIA L. CUTLIP** (nee Mooney), age 76, of Twinsburg, entered into rest March 19, 2008. Funeral Services were held on Monday, March 24. Burial was at Crown Hill Cemetery.

**JOAN M. MUNN** (nee Wintour), age 88, of Twinsburg, entered in rest on March 29, 2008. She was the beloved wife of the late George Furka and Ralph Munn; loving mother the late Jack Furka; dear grandmother of John (Carrie) Furka; mother-in-law of Cindy Furka Rubino; great grandmother of Shannon and Nicholas Furka; aunt of John (Gerry deceased) Huisman and Judy (Tony) Cascone; sister of the late Robert Wintour and Dorothy Huisman. Joan was a member of the Twinsburg VFW Post #4929 Ladies Auxiliary. Services were held on Wednesday April 2, 2008.

A Memorial Service was held on April 5 for **David Lee Maxwell**, formerly of Twinsburg. He was the son of Paul and Wanda Mikula. He had passed away on February 20, 2008, in Pleasant View, Tennessee.

## Congratulations to -

New parents, Patrick and Erin Hooper and new grandparents, Dave & Elizabeth Murch. The twin girls, Campbell Grace and Evelyn Elizabeth, were born on April 10, 2008. They weighed in at 4 lbs 13 oz. and 5 lbs 3 oz. Everyone is doing fine.

## Celebrating An Anniversary This Month

- Kevin, Sr. & Vera Murphy, 5/4/1996
- Steve & Kathy Lessman, 05/10/1986
- Tony & Veronica Roberson, 5/16/1981
- Wilfred & Joan Terrill, 05/17/1997
- Richard & Chia-Wen Paponetti, 05/17/2003
- Bob & Gayle Davet, 5/22/1982

**If we missed your birthday or anniversary, please call the church office so we can update our records.**

# May Schedules

## May Servers

Dan Richner  
 Rick Sheehan  
 Dave Schilling  
 Cody Roberts  
 Ken Prentice  
 Judy Turk - Bread  
 Dan Richner - Greeters



Communion will be

Sunday, May 4th this month

*Those attending church who wish to receive communion need to be present in the sanctuary.*



Acolytes

May 4, 2008  
**Joey Schultz**  
 Justin Doe

May 11, 2008  
**Vivian Weiss**  
 Robert Hoyt

May 18, 2008  
**Tara Schilling**  
 Doug Verbic

May 25, 2008  
**Kayla Bencie**  
 Gwen Richner

The families of the names in **bold** have Acolyte Coordinator Duty and should light the sticks and assist the acolytes.

Please see the instruction sheet posted on the wall next to the sticks.

***If you are unable to serve on your assigned week,***

please find a replacement and notify the church office of the change.

Thank you!

Lay Reader's Schedule  
 May 2008

May 4— Gayle Davet  
 May 11—Kayla Bencie  
 May 18—Dan Richner  
 May 27—Phil Weiss

If there are any changes to this, please let the office know so that it can be correct in the bulletin.

Children's Sermon Schedule  
 May 2008

May 4— Will Adams  
 May 11—Joel Pietrantozzi  
 May 18—Denise Sheehan  
 May 27—Karen Holzwarth

If there are any changes to this, please let the office know so that it can be correct in the bulletin.

Scrap Booking Friday  
 May 16, 2008

6:00 p.m.—midnight  
 in the Fellowship Hall



## The 4 Faces of Stewardship *Our responsibility goes beyond money.*

Mark 4:21–25; 1 Corinthians 15:58

*I have four things to say about stewardship, and only one of them has to do with dollars. Not that I mind talking about money. I think the organized church is not always honest on the subject.*

**We are stewards of relationships.** The early church was not famous for how it grew, nor for its balanced budget. It was known for the way people loved one another. The church is more like a family than a business. The relation is more important than the production. We get into trouble if we start borrowing the language of figures from business and measuring the church with it. Instead, we have to use terms like “healthy,” “unhealthy,” “improving,” “deteriorating,” and “spiritual.” As part of that stewardship, we owe each other encouragement.

*As a steward of relationships, I am doing:*     Well     Fairly well     Not too well

**We are stewards of a special identity.** The pastor of the Moscow Baptist Church once explained to me, “We have some people who come but aren’t ready yet to take on the identity of a Christian.” I must accept the fact that I am a Christian and behave like one. True Christians have a stewardship of identity within them; they are pilgrims, sojourners, citizens of heaven on their way home. That makes them participants, not observers. I wonder if the Lord will someday say to us observers, “I never really knew you; I only met you while you were observing my participants.”

*As a steward of a Christian identity, I am doing:*     Well     Fairly well     Not too well

**We are stewards of our gifts.** We talk a lot about talents and sometimes not that much about spiritual gifts. But I am convinced that gifts are what the Spirit uses. I believe gifts are simply talents that have been functioned by the spirit. Since all of us have at least one talent, we all have a potential gift. Stewardship of gifts is not a trivial matter. We must take them seriously.

*As a steward of gifts, I am doing:*     Well     Fairly well     Not too well

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**We are stewards of money.** All I know about giving can be put into three points: (1) Those who legalistically give a tithe never really enjoy it. Those who give out of love enjoy it and are not worried about figuring on the net or gross, or even more. (2) Giving is the only drain plug I know for greed. Giving is the way to drain greed out of the soul. (3) God is interested not in our money but our maturity. Some people try to substitute service for giving, while others give to avoid serving. Neither one works; both are required for Christian maturity.

*As a steward of money, I am doing:*

Well

Fairly  
well

Not too  
well

—FRED SMITH

### *Message from the Moderator:*

Oh well the April Council meeting is over and I am proud to report that the committees of our church are hard at work doing what they do.

The souper supper program the Fellowship committee oversees is a blessing to be sure, lots of folks come in to eat and fellowship prior to each council meeting, and several stay to keep an eye on us as we conduct the business of the church. Don't forget our meetings are open to anyone, and though only council members have a vote, everyone is welcome and even encouraged to have a say in the day to day workings of the church.

Since most of the business of our church is handled at the committee level council only had one vote beyond the normal meeting stuff. You may remember that we started the year with a few vacancies on some committees. This month we are proud to welcome a new Deacon, and a new chair of the Leadership Development Committee.

Aaron Mayer will take a seat on Deaconate, and Jane Weiss will chair the Leadership Development Committee. Aaron is my nephew, married to Lisa, father of Oliver and Adeline, and a mystery guest we will meet later this year.

Regrettably, we also accepted the resignation of Cody Roberts from Deaconate. Cody made the decision to relinquish his seat, only after realizing that no matter how hard you try, you can only fit so much stuff into given time fame of your life. I am proud to thank Cody on behalf of all of us, and no worries, he will have plenty of time to serve later on.

Speaking of plenty of time, let's remember to prayerfully support the Pulpit Committee. They are certainly spending plenty of time on their task. They meet weekly, if not more often. When they are not meeting, they spend lots of time reading and considering Pastoral profiles, calling references, and working hard to call the right Pastor for us. It is a daunting task. These folks deserve our prayers and thanks.

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We have some new opportunities for involvement in Sunday morning worship. If you watch carefully over a couple of months, you will see that we have the same group of folks who sit on the steps and talk with the future our house of faith. There are eight or so of us on the Children's Sermon list. It is a fun and light hearted moment during worship, and as we have all seen and heard, the kids will keep you on your toes.

We hope to establish the same kind of list for the Sound System Operators and the Lay Readers. Lay Readers don't have to be officers, or even members of the church. Pastor Link will help you become comfortable with the whole procedure, and you don't even have to write the prayers or calls. On top of all that, you get to sit up front and see everyone's face.

Now if you prefer a more behind the scenes type of approach, then you might want to operate the sound system. We will have a training session or two to help you get comfortable with the controls. These two positions may be at opposite ends of the Sanctuary, but they are both in the forefront of our ministry to one another. The more people we can get on these two lists, the more hands we will have to share the task and the fewer times a year you will be asked to serve. In the coming weeks you will most likely be asked to consider one of the posts. Please think of it as a chance to be more involved in the business of the church. Remember that the business of the church is serving God through praise and service to one another and the world.

Wow, you know, a lot has happened since the last time I made the Tower deadline with a few lines. It has been so long the Carol has demanded three pages. Sorry Carol.

Since last I sat and wrote, I have been on a roller coaster of life. Around Valentines Day, I visited an old friend. The man with whom I was sworn into the Solon Fire Department. He lived in Newbury, and before I got home that day, Kurt took his last breath and met his Savior. An avid outdoorsman, Kurt loved to camp in all kinds of weather, in an unheated tent, and he enjoyed good whiskey. He was the consummate firefighter and paramedic. He was skilled, careful and fearless. I referred to him as the All American Boy. I will miss him.

A few weeks later my son Tom came home safely from Iraq. Then the news that Louise Jackson's grandson, Tom, was also home safe. I'll bet you can guess which events were which on the roller coaster. I am sorry to have lost Kurt, and overjoyed to have the Toms home. That is life.

The most precious gift God gave us is given with the condition of free will. As we wander through our lives, God watches and waits for us to notice His presence. In the time of creation, He could have "programmed" us to love, honor and serve Him without question, but He didn't. I choose to believe that God figured that a people of free will would think for themselves, act on the changing conditions that confront them and seek His guidance from time to time.

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I further choose to believe that God knew what He was doing. Whenever I find myself on the roller coaster, I always know that I am safe and secure. I know that because God never fails to reassure me. Sometimes I get a wink and a smile, or a warm touch from a friend. Often it is an uplifting word, or an act of unprovoked kindness. More often than not, it is gridlock and a string of red lights when I have no time for either. Some reminders are harder to read than others. We just need to step back, take a deep breath and see with our hearts.

We are and will remain a people of free will within the Realm of God. Free to seek His protection for our children as they grow and make their way into the world. Free to ask for comfort at the loss of a loved one. Free to let God be our safety bar on the roller coaster of life.

But let's try not to forget our manners. We think nothing of giving a quick wave to an accommodating fellow driver, we always say thank you at the drive up window of Wendy's. Let's try to remember our manners with God as well. Let's try to make a point to spread our thanks out over the whole week, not just Sunday.

Tom and I are going fishing this weekend. We will spend a lot of time standing in the cool clear water surrounded by the beauty of nature. We will wonder why God made trout so smart. And I will spend a good deal of time saying thanks, because you can say thanks and cast at the same time.

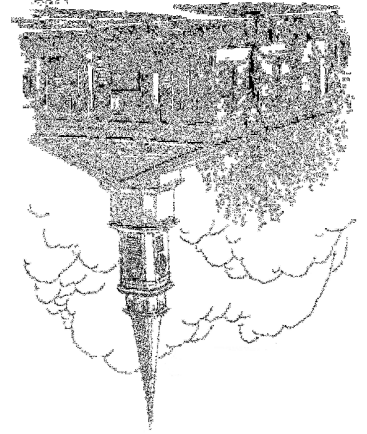
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God's love to you  
clousseau

## **From the Stewardship Committee . . .**

As an exercise in Christian stewardship and maturity, the Stewardship Committee is designating Sunday, June 8, Tithing Sunday. We are encouraging all members to demonstrate their faith in God by making your best attempt at tithing (donating 10% of) your weekly income on this Sunday. This is not intended as a fund raiser, rather it is a faith raiser – a contest between love of money and love of God and Jesus. Finding financial freedom as a child of God is a powerful conversion experience. 'So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed' (John 8:36). More powerful yet, however, are the exponential results when our faith community is transformed financially. We demonstrate our faith through attending Sunday school and church, fellowship with one another, and service to each other and the community. Let us experience this form of faith as we give to God first and experience the blessing that comes with it.

On the square in Twinsburg  
since 1848



Dated Material—  
Please Rush!



e-mail: [firstcongregational.church@windstream.net](mailto:firstcongregational.church@windstream.net)

Church: 330-425-2181  
fax: 330-425-1759

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Monday through Friday  
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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**Come worship with us  
and bring a friend!  
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.  
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.**

**Tower Submissions**

Articles for the *Tower* may be e-mailed directly to the church at [firstcongregational.church@windstream.net](mailto:firstcongregational.church@windstream.net). Hard copies, CD's, or diskettes may be dropped off at the office.

Tower deadlines are posted on the monthly calendar and in the Sunday worship bulletin. For questions, or to be added to or taken off the mailing list, please send an e-mail or call the church office at 330-425-2181.