



Message from the Pastor:

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

The ice hangs heavy on the trees, bushes and power lines. Life seems frozen except for those persistent squirrels who venture out on slippery tree limbs. By the time you receive this, Christmas will have begun regardless of bad weather, frightful, painful or pleasant circumstances. Remember this season begins on December 25. Don't be dismayed that you didn't get to sing enough Christmas carols in church this year. We will continue singing those carols December 28 and January 4. "Tis the season!"

January 4, the celebrating continues with the **arrival of the Wise Ones** (often called kings or wise men). They came to worship the Christ, the newborn King. They were not Jews. They were foreigners. They travelled a great distance. These wise ones represent the whole world. January 6 begins the season of Epiphany (meaning the revealing of **Jesus as the Christ, the Light of the World**). During the fellowship time, the Deacons will serve a kings' cake. Within the cake are hidden three beans. Bean finders will help to lead the Epiphany Sunday worship next year – the call to worship, reading scripture, and the call to offering. It is a fun tradition.

JANUARY 11, 2009 – 2:00 p.m. - A WORD ABOUT MY INSTALLATION

I do wish we would find another term for this. Every time I hear it, I think of installing appliances and plumbing, sinks or other household necessities. Well, I do hope you think of me as a necessity. This worship service is a recognition and celebration of the covenant with God, First Congregational Church, the Western Reserve Association and me. We agree to be faithful in our respective areas of responsibility. We agree to aid one another in naming and living the ministry to which God calls us. In order that others from the Association might attend, the time for this service is **2:00 p.m.** I have asked my friend and colleague, the Rev. Jan Davis, of Green Bay, Wisconsin, to be the guest preacher at this service. Jan began ministry in Christian Education as did I. And she has served churches in Wisconsin and Iowa as Christian Educator, pastor, interim pastor and as Association Minister of the Northeast Wisconsin Association of United Church of Christ. She is one of the partners in the UCC Partners in Education and continues to be active in the Association of United Church Educators as an officer and workshop leader. The Rev. Curt Ackley will represent the Association in addition to a member from the Association Church and Ministry Committee. And I have asked the Rev. Jill Harkins-Goodman to deliver the "charge to the pastor". In addition to being a family friend, Jill is married to Eric, is mother to Abby, Chair of the Stewardship Ministry Team and before Abby's arrival, served the Bainbridge UCC as pastor. A reception follows. Thank you to Gail Davet, Gail Herrilko, and Bonnie Williams for planning this. All are welcome. Please feel free to invite your friends or neighbors. And yes, we will worship also at 10:30 a.m. that morning.

AN INVITATION

The Western Reserve Association and First Congregational Church of Twinsburg
United Church of Christ invite you to a Service of installation
of the Rev. Mary Kay Krejci
On Sunday, January 11th 2009 at 2:00 p.m.
First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
9050 Church Street
Twinsburg, Ohio 44087
Reception following in Fellowship Hall

JANUARY 18 The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins. Please see the schedule later in the newsletter. In my experience, this full week of cooperation and worship among area churches is a rare find—so rare I am not aware of this happening elsewhere. So I encourage you to take the opportunity to worship as often as your schedule allows, praying that this continued appreciation for one another is one way we can live out the prayer that Jesus offered on behalf of the disciples, “that they (we) may all be one”.

FEBRUARY 1 AND FEBRUARY 8 – New Member Gatherings

Following worship on these two Sundays, those who are considering church membership will gather in the library for information, conversation and orientation to worship, church life and faith practice here at First Congregational Church U.C.C. Please let me know if you would like to be part of this group. Please call the church office – 330-425-2181.

FEBRUARY 15 – New Members will be received in worship.

LARGE DESK – A very large desk (drawers four feet in depth) may go to the person making the best offer. The wood is cherry and the desk had been in the parsonage for some years. Please call the church office if you would like to see it. Presently, it is in the parsonage garage. P.S. I wondered after the *Frederick* Field Mouse story if I would hear from our Church Mouse. See page 5

Blessings, Kay

WORSHIP

The Deacons have been looking at why we do what we do in worship. The Deacons have asked that the following be printed in the newsletter. These definitions appear in a confirmation manual (*Confirming Our Faith*). **WORSHIP IS**

- 1-Worship is showing respect and adoration for God (Revelation 4:11).
- 2-Worship is our response to what God has done, is doing and will do for us (Psalm 111).
- 3-Worship is looking back in faith so that we can look ahead in hope (Mark 14:22-25).
- 4-Worship is the making real of eternal life (John 6: 51-54).
- 5-Worship is having a good time with God and with one another. (See Psalms 98 and 150).
- 6-Worship involves the whole person; it involves the whole community (Romans 12).
- 7-Worship helps to equip us for service to Jesus Christ. (Read Ephesians 3 -6).
- 8-Worship is celebrating our life together as the people of God (1 Peter 2:9).

NOTE FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

It is that time of the year again to issue the new years envelopes. I have found that in the past not everyone chooses to use church envelopes. I try diligently to record all contributions so that you get a quarterly statement for tax purposes. I have no way of doing this with cash contributions unless you have envelopes.

When issuing envelopes I try to use an “educated guess” who wants envelopes and who prefers not to use them. I do this in order to try and alleviate some waste. Every year I have to dispose envelopes that have not been picked up or used during the year.

If you did not find a box of envelopes in the church narthex and would like a set please place a note in the collection plate, tell me or notify the church office. I will then get a set to you.

Anyone who has been or desires to contribute using envelopes will get them. You do not have to submit a “Estimate of Giving” or be a member of the church to receive envelopes.

On another note, please note on your check or envelope if you desire to contribute to a specific fund. All contributions with no notation are credited to the General Fund.

All contributions are treated in a very confidential manner with the exception of Memorial gifts. No one other than myself has access to these records. Therefore if you make a contribution and would like me to disclose the gift to anyone please let me know.

Thank You,
Dick Sheller, Financial Secretary

From our friends in Florida:

We wish to send our Holiday and New Year good wishes to all our members and friends.

Sincerely,
Joan Terrill and Bob Ford

Bits from Benevolence

THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT in the following giving opportunities:

CHRISTMAS OFFERING – Final giving figures will be posted on the Benevolence Committee bulletin board after the December 28 worship service financial figures are available. As shared in the November Tower, this year's offering (unless otherwise requested) will be divided between the UCC Christmas Fund, *First Congregational Pastoral Emergency Fund, and disaster relief (through Church World Service unless another need arises prior to disbursement).

*First Congregational Pastoral Emergency Fund allows our church to respond to immediate needs of friends/members for whom urgent needs have arisen for which other funds are not available. These needs may be a gift card for groceries or gas, a check to help with a utility bill or medical needs.

NANKANG CHINESE CHILDREN'S ORPHANAGE – In the annual report from Chinese Children Adoption Intl showed the gift of \$400 sent through our church being used to buy a washing machine. Nankang Orphanage was the first home to Eleanor Holzwarth who, since joining the Holzwarth family, has brought so much joy not only to them but to the First Congregational family

ONGOING DONATIONS – Your ongoing donations of non-monetary items include:

--Non-perishable food items – are always in need and gratefully accepted by the North Summit Emergency Center, which responds to northern Summit County residents in need. A reminder that because children are usually involved, there is always a need for peanut butter and jelly, cereal, macaroni and cheese, and quick meals such as tuna and hamburger helpers. These items may be left in the narthex or the collection box located near the entrance to the church kitchen.

--Used eye glasses are either taken to a local optometrist or to Church Women United where they are forwarded for repairs and classification before redistribution in third world countries.

--Pop can tabs go to Summit County Children's Hospital Burn Unit.

--Campbell Soup Labels and Betty Crocker box labels are sorted by Church Women United and given to the schools for educational material

--USO – Remember our men and women in the service with donations of small toiletries (soap, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, toothbrushes, (etcetera). These are taken directly to the USO.

Don't forget the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 25 after worship service. Annual Reports will be available for review the Sunday before. Any questions, please call the office, 330-425-2181.

All services will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 18

Host: The Sanctuary of Praise **Speaker:** Rev. Dick Seawright

Scripture: Ezekiel 37:15-19, 22-24a; Psalm 103:8-13,18;

1 Cor. 3:3-7,21-23; John 17:17-21

Monday, January 19

Host: Faith United Methodist Church **Speaker:** To Be Announced

Scripture: Isaiah 2:1-4; Psalm 74:18-23; 1Peter 2:21-25; Matthew 5:38-48

Tuesday, January 20

Host: First Congregational Church **Speaker:** Rev. Ed Brady

Scripture: Leviticus 25:8-14; Psalm 146; 1Timothy 6:9-10, Luke 4:16-21

Wednesday, January 21

Host: Good Shepherd Christian Church **Speaker:** Rev. Burrell Garren
(formerly Shepard Road Christian Church)

Scripture: Genesis 1:31-2:3, Psalm 148: 1-5; Romans 8:18-23, Matthew 13:31-32

Thursday, January 22

Host: Christ the King Lutheran Church **Speaker:** Rev. Kay Krejci

Scripture: Isaiah 58:6-12, Psalm 133; Galatians 3:26-29, Luke 18:9-14

Friday, January 23

Host: Twinsburg Church of Christ **Speaker:** Bishop Smith

Scripture: II Kings 20:1-6, Psalm 22:1-11; James 5:13-15, Mark 10:46-52

Please plan to join us for these services.

From The Church Mouse



It certainly has been a busy month. The food has been especially good. The last Souper supper was probably the best. I had the broccoli cheese soup and the stuffed pepper soup. Wish I could have tasted the others, but I was too full.

A few weeks ago I was surprised and happy to see so many of our young people involved with the service. Melissa was the lay reader, the Doe boys were the ushers and Mark was singing in the choir. I like when they take over. You never know what to expect.

Speaking of not knowing what to expect, if you missed the Jesus Birthday Party entertainment, you really missed a great night. I was sitting in the front when the congregation was doing the Twelve Days of Christmas. I so enjoyed watching Marge and Joe flapping their wings. I'm not sure if they were partridges or turtle doves but they were taking their part seriously. Then the Doe family were the Lords a Leaping. Once they got into it, it was a sight to see. But I was part of the Geese a Laying. I think we laid three eggs.

I have just one problem. I have been listening diligently to the last few sermons and have heard Pastor Kay include several mice in her sermons. I'm beginning to feel a bit left out. I guess I'll have to work harder at being your church mouse.

Happy New Year to all!!!!

Donated to the Metro
Health NICU:

4th Qtr	YTD	Item
77	383	Preemie Hats
48	379	Crocheted Blankets
43	207	Pairs of Booties
41	74	Preemie Sweaters

Donated to Shelter in Akron:

4th Qtr	YTD	Item
71	93	Hats
16	32	Scarves
0	2 pr	Slippers
6	11	Children's Mittens

Donated to the Hospice of
The Western Reserve:

4th Qtr	YTD	Item
43	92	Lap Robes
11 pr	21 pr	Bed socks
5 pr	5 pr	Slippers

Donated to Cancer Units
in Cleveland:

YTD	Item
37	Lap Robes
22	Crocheted Toys

Donated to USO Service Center
For Soldier's Families:

4th Qtr	YTD	Item
5	7	Blankets
-	2	Tied Quilts
-	10	Onesies
3	3	Receiving Blankets
-	2	Complete layettes

Donated to Dr. Shaw for Akron
Babies & Children's Hospital:

4th Qtr	YTD	Item
9	29	Blankets
65	160	Hats

Donated to Blessings of
Summit & Portage Counties:

4th Qtr	YTD	Item
5	8	Blankets
-	4	Tied Quilts

These ladies have been busy! Thanks to all of their hard work many people have been blessed with their handiwork.

NEWS from Youth Group

The annual youth group sub sale will start on January 11 after worship. The sale will continue through February 1. The youth group will be "locked in" February 7-8, when they will make the subs and have them ready to be picked up after service on February 8. The sub price has yet to be determined, so watch the bulletin for the latest news. Please help support the youth. This is one of their big fund raisers for the year.

Here I sit, staring at a blank monitor, trying to think of an lead sentence that won't be trite. When my Mom did this sort of thing she sat almost where I'm sitting now, and banged away on an old Royal typewriter that sounded kind of like a machine gun. It took up less desk top space than my printer, and there was no monitor or mouse, no CPU on the floor, and the desk top was just that. Today my desk top is part of the operating system I don't understand, but rely on anyway. Mom had no spell check, no word processing software, and her copies were kept in a big black file cabinet that now holds power tools in the garage.

With all those changes I can't help but remember that my keyboard looks very much like Mom's did, all the letters are still in the same place, and I really don't know how to use any of those other keys anyway.

All this make me think of our church, and the Lord and Savior we love and serve. Surely a lot of things have changed over the years, but a great many things are still the same. We'll spend some time remembering 2008, along with the years that came before it at another time. It's a new year, with new opportunities for worship, praise and service. Let's think about that for a bit.

On Sunday, January 11th, at 2 pm, we will officially install our new pastor. We've waited till now because of a couple of logistical issues, and now we're ready to proceed. Once we have installed Kay, she is going to hold some new member classes with hopes of seeing our family grow.

The following Saturday, January 17th, we will host a spaghetti dinner where we invite members of the Solon Community Church, and the Bainbridge Community UCC to join us. Carol and I have been in conversation with leaders from these two communities of faith for several months now and have found that we all three face a set of very similar challenges and circumstances. Prior to dinner we will present a historical overview of our church home, followed by dinner and fellowship in fellowship hall. We've one more meeting before final arrangement are made, so watch you bulletins and listen for special announcements.

The next week is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. We all know what that means. The worst weather week of the year. Thank God it's early this year, maybe we can plant peas on St. Patrick's Day. We will host the service on Tuesday on that week. I'll bet the complete schedule appears elsewhere in The Tower.

Because of the week of prayer, we will move the council meeting up a week to January 14th. If you are a member of council please make sure your budget has been submitted to the Stewardship committee prior to then. It will be our last chance to review the entire budget before we present it to the congregation at the annual meeting.

The annual meeting will take place on January 25Th, immediately following worship. We will elect officers, approve the budget for the coming year and hear other business that may be brought before the congregation. It's the big one folks, and we only do it once a year, so please try to attend.

Enough business for one month. I was surprised the other day with letter from Greg Russell. Most of you will no doubt remember Greg as a friend and former pastor who served here in the middle 1990's. I wanted to share a bit of his news. He is currently serving a church in Madison, Indiana. It's good to know that Greg is happy and doing well.

That'll do for now, except of course for the grandchild update, Kaylee is in gymnastics and her brother Cole is taking golf lessons. They will have to celebrate Mobile's Mardi Gras without us this year. Natalie and Sydney will be back in Ohio to stay before the next Tower comes out. Larry has been transferred, and they have a new home in the frozen north. Ava is over six pounds, she eats and sleeps, just wait until this time next year.

God's love to you

clousseau

Thank You!!

My family and I wish to thank all the members and friends of the Twinsburg Congregational Church for your thoughts and prayers during my son's long illness. Just knowing that helped so much. Rev. Krejci, you were so loving in giving of yourself in time and providing such a personal tribute and honor for Gerry. We thank you, and it will be another treasure in our memory. Kathy, your music was special too because Gerry, as well as all of our family, always loved music and singing. And to the Ladies Guild, what can I say except you are the greatest! And Ken, your always cheerful greeting is so welcome. A special thank you to Will and Marge for all of the help. At this time of year, my heart swells with thanksgiving to all of you and may God bless you all as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior.

Sincerely, Mabel Lapka

Please join Rev. Kay and the Pastoral Relations committee for a discussion about our mission and ministry at First Congregational Church on Wednesday, January 28 at 6:30 p.m. We will be sharing our joys and concerns regarding our church. Everyone is invited to attend and share their views.

We mourn the loss of Gerald "Gerry" Frank Lapka. He passed away on December 8, 2008 after a long battle with cancer. A memorial service was held at the church on Saturday, December 13. He was a cousin to Will Adams and Gail Herrilko.

We also mourn the passing of Isabel Franks. She passed away on December 10 from pneumonia. There will be a memorial service held at the church on January 5 at 2:00 p.m. Please join us for this service.

**Don't forget the Annual Meeting
on Sunday January 25
after worship service.**

January Schedules

January 4, 2008

Brad Verbic
Jared Doe

January 11, 2008

Andrew Prentice
Jason Powell

January 18, 2008

Anthony Pietrantonzi
Vivian Weiss

January 25, 2008

Madelyn Sokolowski
David Schilling



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

If you are unable to serve on your assigned week, please find a replacement and notify the church office of the change. Thank you!

January Servers

Dan Richner
Rick Sheehan
Dave Schilling
Will Adams
Aaron Mayer
Ken Prentice
Judy Turk - Bread
Bonnie Williams - Greeters



Communion will be
January 4th this month



Scrap Booking Friday

January 16, 2008

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

ATTENDANCE

Sunday School Worship Service		
Nov. 30 th	48	122
Dec. 7 th	41	106
Birthday Party for Jesus—61		
Dec. 14 th	37	118
Dec. 21 rd	39	118

Lay Reader's Schedule

January 4—Dottie Oliver
January 11—Phil Weiss
January 18—Rick Sheehan
January 25—Vivian Weiss

Children's Sermon Schedule

January 4— Will Adams
January 11—Joel Pietrantonzi
January 18—Denice Sheehan
January 25—Gayle Davet

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

Lockup Trustee for the month of January - Gail Herrilko

Happy Birthday to:



Mike Geither

01/02

Andrea Bennett

01/02

Katie Delgado

01/05

Brandon Miller

01/06

Peter Weiss

01/07

Bonnie Williams

01/08

Irwin Turnbull

01/09

Jared Verbic

01/11

Terri Bissell

01/11

Gail Herrilko

01/15

Gordon Weiss

01/16

Robert Barbey

01/16

Stewart Lessman

01/17

Jane Gant

01/19

Donna Miller

01/20

Kalem Sokolowski

01/23

Risa Roberson

01/24

Janet Hanzel

01/24

Chloe Wentz

01/26

Audrey Turner

01/26

Rich Bissell

01/28

Joel Pietrantozzi

01/29

Happy Anniversary

to:

Doris & Irwin Turnbull

01/10/1953



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

Congratulations!

Josephine Louise Mayer was baptized on Sunday, November 30. She is the daughter of Lisa and Aaron Mayer. She is the grand daughter of Rick and Gail Herrilko. She has a brother, Oliver, and a sister, Adeline. Please welcome her into our church family.

Lillian Elizabeth Williams will be baptized on Sunday, December 28th. She is the daughter of Emily and Jonathan Williams. She is their first child. She is the granddaughter of Bonnie and John Williams. She is the great granddaughter of Lea and Don Bissell and Mary Williams. Please welcome her into our church family.

Evening Women's Fellowship

Monday, January 5, 2008

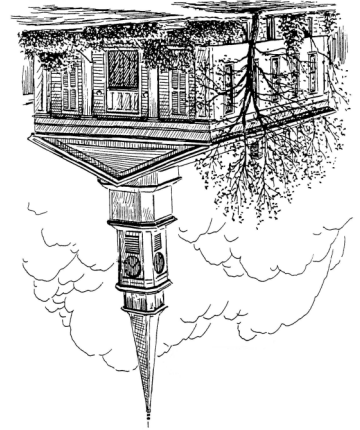
7:00 p.m.—Fellowship Hall

Come and have
a Joyous Surprise!

We missed Joyce Harney's birthday last month. Her birthday was December 15. Happy Belated Birthday, Joyce.

If you know of anyone whose birthday was missed, please let the office know.

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e-mail: firstcongregational.church@windstream.net

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Fax: 330-425-1759

Office Hours:
Monday through Friday
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Twinsburg, OH 44087
United Church of Christ
9050 Church Street

A Publication of the First Congregational Church of Twinsburg

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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. 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.