



Thanks a Million!

It's stewardship season, but instead of talking about our pledges for next year, I'd like to thank you for your exuberant generosity in 2009. In a year of recession, our giving at First United has been steady, strong and growing. I can say, "Thanks a million," because our total income in 2009 will be \$1,015,000.

Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." If we look into the heart of the church checkbook, we see where our treasure is invested. Our million-dollar income this year comes from three sources:

- Pledges and offerings contribute two-thirds of our income (\$674,000)
- Proceeds from our endowments represent one-fourth of our income (\$250,000)
- Grant and trust income and building use donations are one-tenth (\$91,000)

How do we spend these gifts that God has entrusted to us? There are four major categories: staff leadership, building / administration, mission and resources.

- Pastoral and music staff salaries and benefits represent 34% of our expenses (\$350,000)
- Administrative staff salaries---office, finance, child care and custodial---account for 19% of our expenses (\$190,000)
- Buildings and grounds and administrative expenses---major repairs and maintenance, utility bills, computers, copiers---require 24% of this year's budget (\$245,000)
- Mission contributions amount to 17% of our total (\$172,000)
- Resources to carry out these ministries equal 6% of expenses (\$57,000)

In total, we spend about 53% of our income on staff. Most churches spend 50% to 60% in this area. Our second biggest expense is our building. While our remaining debt on the recent renovations is about \$250,000, we have to spend a great deal on maintenance and repairs due to the age of our beautiful building and its constant, daily use by our own ministry and mission teams and a host of community groups. We give away 17% of our total income to mission. Most churches' mission giving is about 10%, but I would like to see us reach 20%. The amount we spend on curriculum, worship supplies, deacons, fellowship and membership is modest.

There is even more good news: we ended 2008 with a surplus, and it appears that we will complete 2009 with a balanced budget or a slight surplus.

Behind every one of these dollars is a giving heart. May our hearts open even wider, to overflow with God's love in the year to come. May you find that giving your money for Christ's mission is truly a sacred act. Because God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good.

In Christian love,
Julie R. Harley, *lead pastor*

Inside...

- Faith in Action* >page 4
- Church School News* >page 5
- Youth News* >page 6
- Adult Education* >page 6
- Pastoral Search* >page 7
- Stewardship News* >page 8
- October* > page 11

Transitions

Births:

Leo Sebastian Stitzel,
son of Mary and Judd, grandson of Mariel and Will
Micah Zander Butler-del Rio,
son of Beth and Mario, brother of Zachary

Baptisms:

Gavin Edward Kanady,
son of Ingrid and Shawn
Nicholas Emerson Zobel,
son of Rebecca and Douglas, grandson of Claudette and Herb

Marriage:

Claire Sorenson and Adam Devlin

Compassion:

Gail DeWalt
Faith Julian
Micah Zander Butler-del Rio
Beth Drews

October Worship

October 4 — Walk or Bike to Church Sunday and World Communion Sunday

Psalm 8

“Love Your Mother”

October 11 — Stewardship Kickoff Sunday

Amos 5:6-7, 10-15 and Mark 10:17-31

“Love in the Gate”

October 18 — Baptisms for William Blazenko, James Caughran, and Emmett and Paige Foster-Simbulan

Deuteronomy 26:1-11 and Matthew 6:2-4; 19-21

“A Tenth of God’s Love”

October 25 — Stewardship Pledge Dedication Sunday and Receiving New Members

1 Corinthians 13:8-13 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

“Love Never Ends”

Deacons:

Carl Nauert	Mario Butler-del Rio
Franklyn (Bud) Hayes	Betsy Samore
Neal McNish	Connie Ronnow
Lee Anderson	Priscilla Sibley
Irene Worley	Sally Sutherland
Chris Davis	Karin Pietrini
Grant Jones	Karla Hayter

Pastoral Care Needs

Please contact a member of the pastoral staff if you need a home visit, hospital visit, nursing home visit or personal counseling. If there is a pastoral emergency after office hours, Lead Pastor Julie R. Harley can be reached on her cell phone at (630) 561-4255.

Yes! We Record Services!

Each Sunday we record a CD of our Sunday service which is then placed in the library and is available for check-out. Right now this is all the work of George Ashman, so if others would be interested in helping occasionally, he would be glad for the assistance. If you are interested in a copy of any CD for yourself or to take to members who are unable to join us at church, you are welcome to copy it yourself or talk with George about how to obtain one. Sermons are available in print on the Elder’s Desk in the Lounge and online through the Church website (www.firstunitedoakpark.com).

New Members Class in October

Our next New Members Classes will meet on the four Sundays in October, and new members will be welcomed on Oct. 25. If you would like to learn more about our mission and ministry here and meet other newcomers, please contact Pastor Mark Buck to enroll in the classes.

Walk or Bike to Church on Sunday, Oct. 4

—Ann Alexander and Paul Aeschleman

The Environmental Stewardship Team invites you to Walk to Church or Ride Your Bike to Church on Sunday, Oct. 4, which is also World Communion Sunday. The health of our earth, our environment and our global neighbors depends upon less use of fossil fuels. This is your opportunity to practice a spiritual discipline—honor God’s Creation by taking a bike or walking to First United. Bike racks are available near the parking lot in back and on the Lake Street side of the church.



Welcome to our new Interim Associate Pastor

—Rev. Mark Buck

—Julie R. Harley

Mark is our new Interim Associate Pastor for Mission and Membership. He will work with our Deacons, Faith in Action Committee and New Members Committee, as well as providing worship leadership and pastoral care. Mark will be with us 30 hours a week during the search for our new called Associate Pastor.

Mark was selected from a field of about 30 candidates by our interim search committee. He brings a wealth of pastoral experience, as well as 11 years of service as a transitional pastor. Mark is a graduate of Elmhurst College and Eden Theological Seminary and has been ordained in the United Church of Christ for 35 years. He has served congregations in Illinois, Iowa, Indiana and Missouri. He and his wife, Jane, live in Highland, IL, and they have a son and daughter-in-law who live in Iowa.

In his ministerial profile, Mark identifies these priorities in his ministry: worship, mission and ministry within and beyond the local church; proactive administration; and maintaining a healthy spiritual life through study, prayer and meditation as well as self-care. Welcome to the team, Mark!

We thank our interim pastor search committee members who worked hard over the summer to find Mark: Marcia Ashton, Chris Davis, Renee Davis, Dan Pietrini and Tom Wolford. The Council voted to approve Rev. Buck at a special meeting on Aug. 29.

Beth Mrkvicka

**Clerk's
Corner**

Council “vacationed” in July and resumed our monthly meetings on August 18 by enjoying a meal and welcoming new Youth and Adult Education minister Leah Fowler. We gathered around the dining room table at Laurie Jolicoeur’s home to share summer stories and anticipate the beginning of a new programming church year.

Claudette Zobel, chair of the Finance Committee, provided us with a “Finance 101” explanation of how to read the monthly financial report. She also reported her committee’s recommendation, which Council approved, to settle the note between Mamie Broadhurst and the church on its stated terms, bringing closure to her ministry with us. Also, in connection with Mamie’s departure, Council approved the Covenant of Closure with Mamie, which formally finalizes her leaving with the Presbytery of Chicago.

Leah Fowler led us in a meaningful discussion of Chapter 6 of the book we are reading together: *The Importance of Spiritual Companionship*. She shared a memory of a person from her youth that affected and impacted her life. We discussed experiences in our own lives where we had been offered spiritual companionship and how that compares to the experience of the Samaritan woman at the well — a place that runs deep and is full of grace, comfort, forgiveness and steadfast faith.

Our Big Picture Conversation was a reflective conversation on our service together – what values do we want to take forward? We did not attempt to rehash the past but rather consider what we had learned and how we might improve our process. Some suggestions included continuing to be transparent and communicative, include broad representation of our congregation on important decisions, play out various scenarios for every situation and stay calm in the face of a storm.

It was reported that Jack McNish has resigned from Council and another youth will be sought to replace him. The pastoral staff all reported enthusiastically on the success of summer programs including SCARF and workcamp and look forward to the resumption of church school, Adult Education and youth groups. We closed by expressing support for our custodian Patrick Guinan, whose father recently died and gratitude for our full life at First United.

WIG

The Wildly Important Goal of First United Church is “creating and maintaining a framework that nourishes the spiritual welfare of the congregation”

Faith **IN ACTION**

A Moment for Denominational Mission —Mark Buck, *Interim Associate Pastor for Membership and Mission*

One of my favorite sayings is from 20th Century Theologian Emil Bruner: "The church exists for mission as a fire exists for burning." Our denominational partners do much across the world to impart the good news of our faith to the poor, lonely, and lost. Here is a story of mission work sponsored by the Common Global Ministries Office of the United Church of Christ, which, because we give to this denomination's "Our Church's Wider Mission" is our mission too. —Shalom, Mark Buck

Homeless and Directionless Find Support

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalm 46:1. St John's Center in Northern Sri Lanka, which is part of Global ministries' partner the Church of the American Ceylon Mission, is working with twelve refugee camps that have been home to thousands displaced from their homes due to civil war.

St John's has nineteen volunteers, eleven pastors, one doctor and two nurses who are working tirelessly among the camps in a systematic and coordinated way offering subsistence food, child care centers, trauma counseling, medical assistance, clean water and sanitation. Recently, about three months after the end of the civil war, the Sri Lankan government decided to send 5000 refugees from the outer camps back to their own villages. St John's received about 200 and gave them packages of food and basic clothes to start their new lives. Since their homes were destroyed they will go to live with relatives. The elderly were also released, and many of these have no place to go. St John's is working to accommodate these elders on a temporary basis in elderly facilities.

Over 300,000 people are still in the camps. About 40% of the displaced are children—many of whom are unaccompanied by family members. Their care is the subject of conversations between the government, social agencies and faith groups like St. John's. 'Thank you very sincerely for your timely support and prayers in taking care of the refugees. Please uphold our ministry in your thoughts and prayers.'

Rev. Dr. S. Jeyanesan is Chair of Church of the American Ceylon Mission, and Project Director of St John's and wrote this letter to James Vijayakumar, Global Ministries Southern Asia Area Executive.

News from Mamie and Richard

—Mamie Broadhurst

As you think of us, please continue to give thanks for the skill and patience of our language teachers, for Jackeline (the daughter in my home) who just turned 10, and for our health and well-being.

Also, please keep Colombia in your prayers. On August 26, 2009, 12 Awá indigenous peoples, including four children, were massacred in the indigenous reserve Gran Rosario in Tumaco, Nariño. If you would like to do something to help, the US Office on Colombia is asking you to call on the Colombian Government to immediately investigate this situation, prosecute those responsible and institute an effective protection program for the remaining members of this highly vulnerable community. For more information, and to sign the automated letter that will be sent by the USOC, go to www.usofficeoncolombia.com and click on the "Urgent Action" button. Thanks!

Faith in Action Hunger Sunday, November 8th

— Jackie Kareb

November 8 has been designated "Hunger Sunday" at First United. This is one of several activities in keeping with our local mission focus on hunger. On Hunger Sunday, Faith in Action Committee is sponsoring Bread for the World's 2009 Offering of Letters. Bills aimed at improving U.S. support of global development and reducing hunger and poverty are pending in both houses of Congress. Bread for the World is working to raise a "collective Christian voice" on this issue through the Offering of Letters. Did you know handwritten letters are considered unique and more likely to gain the attention of our legislators? Come and help our voices be heard! The letters we generate from this activity are important for urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger both at home and abroad. Materials and information for letter writing will be available both before and after worship on Hunger Sunday.

more Faith inAction>



**Witness Against Torture and
Take Action in Defense of Human Rights Nov. 20-23**

—Julie R. Harley

Each year thousands of peacemakers gather at the School of the Americas (SOA) in Ft. Benning, GA, to take a stand against violence. The SOA, renamed WHINSEC (the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation), has trained over 64,000 Latin American soldiers in counterinsurgency techniques, sniper training, commando and psychological warfare, and interrogation tactics. Graduates of the SOA have been consistently linked to human rights violations against educators, union organizers, religious workers, students and others working for the poor. SOA graduates were responsible for the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero and the torture, rape, disappearance and murder of thousands of others. Pastor Julie Harley will lead a group to this military base near Atlanta on Nov. 20-23. Please contact Julie ASAP to arrange a flight and hotel. We will meet others organized by the Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America (CRLN).

Children's Ministry

—Marylen Marty-Gentile

But not everything or even most. Church school began last month, with spirit and a flourish. Our church school leaders are in place and they are off, building Christian community, sharing with your children and youth stories of our tradition, offering opportunities to serve the world as God's hands and feet.

But no matter how much we do here at First United, (and we do a lot with love and grace), you parents are your children's and youth's most important educators. When you come and when you bring them to church school and worship, you teach them worshipping God matters and Christian education is a life-long journey. When you pray, you teach them prayer matters. When you include God in your life, you teach them that God cares about what happens to you...and God cares about them and their life. If you feel detached from God, it's nearly impossible that your children don't feel God is out there and indifferent.

When you give your time to serve others as a servant of Jesus, you teach them that we are called by God to serve others. When you make sure they bring an offering to church, you help them know that we are called to share our money, as well as our time, with others.

We do a lot but not everything. You do more. But don't worry. Faith formation is not rocket science, as Ivy Beckwith notes in her book *Postmodern Children's Ministry*. A sunset is a chance to talk about God's creative imagination. A frightening experience is a time to talk about how we can talk to God about anything. Let your child see a Bible in your home. One mom places her hand on her child's head as he leaves for school and asks God to bless him in his school time. The first time you say the "G" word to your child might be hard. The second time is easier. You're a teacher whether you know it or not. Your life teaches your children what is important. Remember...Nike is right—just do it.

Quest

—Marylen Marty-Gentile

Pray for Our Questors This year's Quest (Confirmation) class has begun and it's a full one, with youth and with ground to cover along our journey. Please pray for our youth as they consider their relationship to this faith community: Andrew Bell, Kevin Bunschoten, Ricardo Castañeda, Austin Cone, Jesse Cornman, Nick Fascione, Jonathan Gilmer, Tom Kuntz, Madeleine Rees, Vicky Reese, Ricky Samore, Richie Wheelock. And please pray for our Quest leaders Art Spooner and members of the pastoral staff.

As part of their exploration, this month the class will travel to the Oriental Institute to see where our faith began.

Budget Breakfast at 8:00 am on Sunday, Oct. 11

—Claudette Zobel

Our finance committee, Council and committee leaders will present a requested budget for 2010 to the congregation at a breakfast meeting at 8:00 am. Oct. 11 in Centennial Hall. A budget is a moral document that should reflect our values and spiritual priorities. All are welcome to learn about financial plans for the upcoming year and ask questions.

Prayers for Peace

On the front steps of the church every Friday evening at 7pm

**INNERPEACE
WORLDPEACE**

Saturday at 8:30 am, in the Conference Room
All are invited.



YOUTH NEWS

— Leah Fowler

FUJI has an exciting fall underway. Please join us, and bring a friend, if you are in grades 7-8! We meet from 6-8 pm unless otherwise noted.

10/4: Apple Picking. Bring \$10 for entry and snacks. Leave the church at 1:30/return at 6:30 pm.

10/11: Mission Day; we will make Apple Crisp to serve to PADS shelter and then hear from a missionary from Nicaragua.

10/18: Tie Dye- please bring your own white shirts or socks to tie-dye.

10/25: Pumpkin Carving contest and Steph's Scary Supper!

FUSH is our 9-12th grade ministry, and seeks to have a balance between recreation, service, reflection and worship. Come join us and bring a friend! We meet from 6-8 pm unless otherwise noted.

10/4: Care Groups Dinner Party.

10/11: Discussion on Work Camp.

10/16-18: FUSH retreat-Pilgrim Park (look for registration forms on the website or at church).

10/25: Make Care Packages for new college Freshman!

FUSHees met last month on their own, without the adult advisors, to create a set of rules for the FUSH community. They believe that the youth will feel empowered to hold each other accountable for the rules that come from their own. They want to share these rules with the church, so look for them on the FUSH Bulletin Board in the Lounge. Here is a note from our Youth Co-Moderator, Rob MacMahon-Lovell:

Hey, First United! The first month of FUSH went great. This month we are going to begin with Care Group dinners, which I'm really looking forward to. Last month FUSH came up with rules for itself so those will be posted in the church. Look for FUSH to post regularly in the Messenger Bell. Looking forward to another great month.

Adult Education in October —Leah Fowler

Join us on October 4 and October 25 for lectionary bible study (Conference Room) and in the Chapel for the following classes:

10/4: The Spirituality of John Calvin: In this 500th anniversary of Reformer John Calvin's birth, Lead Pastor Julie Harley will introduce us to his spirituality. How did he experience God? What were his beliefs about prayer and scripture reading? Why did John Calvin endorse spiritual guidance? How did he practice his faith in the world? How can we learn by his example? You're in for many surprises, as we learn about the passionate spirituality of a 16th century founder of our faith.

10/25: Environmental Stewardship: How does environmental stewardship stand out as a practice of faith? Learn the theology of environmental stewardship from a Christian perspective, as well as from other faith perspectives. Erika Dornfield, a seminarian who works at Faith In Place, will lead this session.

Calling all Gardeners —Renee Davis

We hope that you are enjoying our beautiful grounds in full bloom this season. I know personally, I really enjoy driving by the church or when I'm on watering duty, seeing people walking the grounds or sitting in the memorial garden just enjoying the day and the scenery. We also hope that you are enjoying the new benches that are now part of the outside patio. This is perfect for Sunday morning gatherings or even taking your kids over for a picnic. The Gardening Committee has had an excellent season with all the new plantings, designing, etc. and we have a lot of wonderful ideas for 2010.

We are looking for new members to join our committee. If you are able to spend a few Saturdays a year, please consider being a part of this wonderful, dynamic, fun group. Also,

continued on next page>



GIVING
as a sacred act

I know that several members have asked how to donate either plants or money to the Committee. If you want to make a financial donation you can either give directly to me, davisporter302@comcast.net or put it in the offering plate and make a note for the Gardening Committee.

Building and Grounds

—Judith Loevy

Over the summer we had extensive masonry work done on both the flat roof area and the Narthex area. We also had a small portion of the flat roof repaired as well as the flashing over room 25 in the Nursery School. We had a full summer of weddings which is really nice for the church. As the wedding facilitator, I love each and every one, and yes I cry at all the weddings. A huge thank you to Renee Davis and the Gardening Committee. The grounds are beautiful. People call the church to comment on the flowers and the greenery. The new benches on the patio are also a wonderful addition to the outdoor area of the church. We even have flowers in the Narthex. The Narthex has been painted in very attractive colors. It is very welcoming. I really appreciate the committee that took on that project. The lighting in the Nursery School and on the first floor has been upgraded to be super energy efficient. Paul Aeschleman deserves a thank you for discovering the grant money for the lighting upgrade and for getting the grant request written.

There is still work to be done. We plod through the “to-do” list whenever we have money available to do the work.

**Pledge Dedication Sunday Oct. 25:
“Giving As a Sacred Act”**

—Stan Davis

Stewardship brochures and pledge cards will be mailed in early October, and we invite you to make your pledge before Oct. 25, which is Dedication Sunday. Pledges can also be made online through the church website: www.firstunitedoakpark.com. Our stewardship goal this year is to gain 55 new pledges for 2010. Those who do not return pledge cards by Oct. 25 will receive a reminder phone call from members of the Finance Committee and Council. Thank you for your exuberant generosity!



Pastoral Search Committee (PSC Update)

—Lou Valsoano

The Pastoral Search Committee for the called associate minister position has been meeting regularly since the last week of August. During this time, our church profiles for both the UCC and Presbyterian denominations have been updated. This involved significant work by two of the Committee members, reviewing profiles from previous positions, updating information as necessary, and customizing the documents for the position we are seeking. Subsequently, the entire committee has been fine tuning the profiles to ensure they give an accurate, update to date picture of First United Church and the position we are seeking to fill. The Committee has also been putting the finishing touches on an advertisement that will appear in magazines such as *The Christian Century*. In addition, we’re looking at updating a brochure of our church used by a previous search committee, which would be given to potential candidates as a means of providing an in depth picture of what First United is all about. By the time you read this article in the *Messenger Bell*, we hope to have these profiles complete and sent to the denominations. This will ensure that our job opening is posted with each denomination. We’re also striving to have the advertisements in place and our information brochure complete. The Committee will then begin determining what criteria and procedures will be used when evaluating the applications of the candidates. We want to have all this in place and everyone on the Committee comfortable with the process prior to beginning the task of reviewing applications. While it is impossible to know how many candidates will apply, we are expecting a large number.

continued on next page>

It isn't magic

It's not magic;
it isn't a trick.
Every breath is a
resurrection.
And when we hear
the poem
Which is the world,
when our eyes
Gaze at the
beloved's body,
We're reborn in all
the sacred parts
Of our own bodies:
the heart
Contracts, the brain
Releases its shower
Of sparks,
and the tear
Embarks on its
pilgrimage
Down the cheek
to meet
The smiling
mouth.

—Gregory Orr

Autumn day

Lord: it is time.

The summer was
enormous.

Lay down your shadow
on the sundials,

And on the meadows
set the winds free.

Command the last
fruits to fullness;

Grant them two more
southerly days,

Press them toward
perfection and chase

The last sweetness into
heavy wine.

—Rainer Maria Rilkey (1875-1926)

Search continued>

Finally, we will continue to seek input from committees and individual members of First United. If you have thoughts you'd like to share with the Committee regarding potential candidates, or the skills, traits, and knowledge necessary for this position, please feel free to contact a member of the Committee. The members are: Marilyn Kauffmann, Robert Hickok, Shanti Kulkarni, Steve Mrkvicka, Janet Guevara, Sara Faust, Melinda Haag, Ted Despotes, Donnie Kuntz, and Lou Valsoano. As we continue this important task, please remember our committee in your prayers.

First United Church Nursery School to Offer Jewel, Dominicks and Starbucks Gift Cards to Church Families

Beginning October 4th, and on the 1st Sunday of each month thereafter, the First United Church Nursery School will have Jewel, Dominicks and Starbucks gift cards available for purchase before and after worship in the church lounge. Each card is purchased at face value and can be used for all your shopping needs. A portion of the proceeds of each purchase will be donated to the Nursery School as well as the Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry. Here's how it works:

1. Tally up the amount you spend each month at Jewel, Dominicks and Starbucks;
2. Bring cash or your checkbook to church on the first Sunday of the month;
3. Purchase the cards in the amount you need from the Nursery School representative;
4. Take the cards home the same day; and
5. Shop!

If you have any questions, please contact Holly Wiemken at (708) 524-9020 or holly.wiemken@att.net. The Nursery School appreciates your support!

Two from Oak Park Attend National Stewardship Conference

—Joanne Despotes

Pastor Julie R. Harley and Joanne Despotes from our Finance and Stewardship Committees will attend a national conference on "Faith and Fundraising" in Dallas, TX, on Oct. 8-10. This event is sponsored by the United Church of Christ and the School of Philanthropy at Indiana University.

Neighborhood Brunches Host Vision Conversations, Oct. 18

—Rick Ashton

We will host brunch meetings at six members' homes from 9:00 to 10:30 am on Sunday, Oct. 18. These neighborhood brunches will take the place of Church School, Quest and adult education on that Sunday only. You will receive a letter describing the host homes, and we hope everyone will be able to attend one. During the gathering, a member of the Vision Team will lead a congregational conversation to discern God's vision for our church in the next 10 years. Other vision conversations will be held at 12:15 pm Sunday, Oct. 4; at 9:30 am Sunday, Oct. 11, and 6:00 pm Sunday, Oct. 25 (for youth only).

PrimeTimers Meet Abraham Lincoln —Marcia Ashton

On Saturday, October 24, PrimeTimers will head to the Newberry Library for a private tour of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Exhibition created by the Library of Congress. This treasure trove of priceless Lincoln artifacts includes rarely seen period letters, documents, photographs and political cartoons. At 8:45 am we will meet at the church parking lot to carpool, spend a couple hours with the exhibit, and then sample one of the many great neighborhood restaurants. We are limited to 20 participants due to space. Admission is free, but we will share parking expense. Hosts are Rick and Marcia Ashton. RSVP by Oct. 16th to 708-524-5126 or marciaashton@msn.com.

Midpoint

—Leah Fowler

The Midpoint Group is for members and friends in their 30's and 40's (fret not, we do not card at the door!). We get together throughout the year to build community and make new friendships. Our kick-off meeting for this program year will be on Friday, October 30, at 7:30 pm at the home of Megan and Justin Lewis 906 Highland Avenue, Oak Park. Please BYO-DOC (Drink of Choice) and a dessert to share or \$5 to contribute; Megan and Justin will provide savory appetizers. RSVP to meganhlewis@comcast.net .



Here are three ways you can sing at First United!

—Bill Chin

Our Sanctuary Choir is up and running, but we always welcome new members. Rehearsals are on Wednesday evenings, 7:00 to 8:30pm, and we have a lot of music planned this year that's great, fun, and beautiful. If you can't make every Wednesday, there are still ways to sing with the choir. We have Open Choir on the last Sunday of each month throughout the year; join us an hour before the service to go over the music. We also invite singers to join us for the major works we present during the year; the next one is the Rutter Requiem, to be sung on November 1 during our All Saints observance. Attending a few of the Wednesday rehearsals prior is recommended. If you're a child, or you have one, consider our children's choir. They meet for thirty minutes immediately after worship on Sundays and sing for services four times a year. Practices begin this month; contact me for a copy of the exact schedule.

What happened at Pipes Peek?

—Cathryn Wilkinson

Several friends and members gathered for "Pipes Peek" on Saturday, Sept. 12. We learned about flutes and trumpets and pistons and swell boxes and reservoirs – a few of the many gadgets that are part of our pipe organ. Here are a few fun facts: the lowest pipes in our organ are 32' tall and the very lowest one vibrates at about 16 cycles per second, just at the very end of human hearing range. The smallest pipes are about the size of a pencil and vibrate at 4,000 cycles per second. The wind supply to the pipes is pressurized in five different wind chests. In the ancient days, children from the church or the neighborhood would have had to pull duty in the organ chamber pumping a bellows so the organist could practice. According to records researched by Michael Laird

<http://www.theatreorgans.com/laird/top.pipe.organs.html>), the organ at First Congregational Church in Los Angeles is the 3rd largest in the world (346 ranks).

The largest Presbyterian church organ is #46 in Glens Falls, New York (Reuter). Chicago is home to organs #69 at Holy Name Cathedral built by Flentrop Organ Builders and #70 at Rockefeller Chapel, built by E. M. Skinner. While the U.S. boasts the lion's share of super-size instruments, others are found in Mexico, Brazil, Sweden, and Canada. Our organ, at 88 ranks, is probably about the 6th largest in Chicagoland. You will never hear all 88 of these sounds at one time or on one Sunday, but over the course of a year, I try to use every stop at least once. Thank you to the whole congregation for owning and maintaining such a rich musical treasure for the people of First United.

HRC to hold Annual Gala

— Bob Berry

Did you know that in 33 states you can be fired from your job without cause for being Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual or Transgendered (GLBT)? Did you know that incessant bullying of Gay students in the high school system is a leading cause for Gay teen suicide? Did you know that on the south and north sides of Chicago GLBT many hate crimes have gone unreported? The Human Rights Campaign is the largest GLBT civil rights organization with over 700,000 volunteers fighting on a daily basis for, not special rights, but equal rights under the law. As big as our numbers are, we cannot do it without your help. On Saturday, November 7th, the HRC Chicago chapter will hold its annual fundraising Gala at the Hyatt in downtown Chicago. This is always an inspiring night for and a very tangible way to contribute to the fight for GLBT equal rights. As your spiritual brother at First United, I would like to extend an invitation to you to join me in this fight by attending our fundraiser on November 7th. For ticket information please contact me at berry.r@comcast.net.

Gabrielle Worley in Lebanon

Gabrielle will be in Lebanon studying political science at Haigazian University for the year. She encourages you to follow her experience through her blog: <http://cedarsofgod.blogspot.com/>

Planned Giving....Finding the Right Lawyer —Gene Armstrong

Sometimes, people who are willing to make a planned gift for the benefit of First United Church feel stymied because they don't know how to make such a gift. I tell them that one good way to get started is to consult a lawyer. Often, this leads to the question: "How do I find the right lawyer?"

A little important background: most planned gifts are specific bequests in wills or designated directives in trusts. So, the right lawyer is one who is particularly knowledgeable about the preparation of wills and trusts and can also advise on related considerations (like tax benefits and consequences). Lawyers generally call this area of specialization estate planning. There are many ways to find an attorney who can help you prepare a will or trust. Our Planned Giving Committee can provide a list of lawyers who can help. Here are other suggestions: Ask a lawyer. One good way is to ask a lawyer you know and respect. Your lawyer friend may be a trial lawyer or focus on real estate transactions, labor law or corporate law, but you can be fairly certain that he or she will know lawyers who concentrate in the area of estate planning and will be happy to refer you to at least one lawyer who can help you prepare a will or trust.

Ask a friend. Another good way to find the right lawyer is to ask a friend. Most of your friends will not think you are snoopy if you ask them if they have a will. They are likely to be pleased to introduce you to the lawyer who helped them prepare their estate plan. Ask an adviser. Usually, you can find a lawyer who specializes in estate planning if you ask your accountant, or your investment adviser, or your financial planner or your insurance agent. Those who work in these fields almost always have regular dealings with lawyers who help people make wills and trusts. They can recommend lawyers who they feel provide sound advice.

If you follow any of these suggestions, you will generate a list of lawyers who can help you make a planned gift for the benefit of our church. But, how do you determine which one is the right lawyer for you? Simple, arrange for an office visit. I'm sure that each of the lawyers on your list would welcome the chance to meet you and discuss how he or she might be able to help. Be sure to ask if there is a charge for this type of meeting. (I'd be surprised if there were since the purpose is not to obtain legal advice.) When you meet a lawyer with whom you can feel comfortable talking about important, highly-personal concerns and goals for yourself and your loved ones, you've found the right lawyer.

Check ✓ This Out! —Carole Bergstraesser

Come see the audio-visual resources in the Bergstraesser Library. They occupy the top two shelves of the bookcase next to the computer and comprise of books on tape, CDs of our worship services, and DVDs. We have budgeted for the acquisition of more, but, in the meantime, please use them.

One that is highlighted here is the seventy-five minute DVD entitled *John Wycliffe: The Morning Star*. Of course, we learned in school that John Wycliffe, a 14th Century cleric, translated the Bible into English. However, the implications and motivation for his actions were profound. He became the defender of English nationalism against the power of the Pope and fought on behalf of the poor against the wealthy ruling class. This DVD is a vivid depiction of his struggle. I recommend it.

**Pledge
Dedication
Sunday**

October 26, 2009



Sacred (adj.):
*reverently dedicated to
some person, purpose:
consecrated, holy.*

Regularly Scheduled Weekly Meetings: *Please check with convener if you have questions.*

<i>Wednesdays</i>	<i>2nd 3rd & 4th and 1st</i>	3:30p 7:00p 7:00p	<i>Food Pantry Open Food Pantry Open Adult Choir</i>	<i>Kathy Russell/Michele Zurakowski - 386-1324</i>
<i>Thursdays</i>		6:30p	<i>Cluster Tutoring Classes</i>	<i>Bill Chin - 386-5215</i>
<i>Fridays</i>		7:00a 7:00p	<i>Men's Breakfast Group Peace Prayer Vigil</i>	<i>Kathy McCabe - 773-378-5530</i>
<i>Saturdays</i>		8:30a 9:00a	<i>Inner Peace/World Peace Food Pantry</i>	<i>Ted Despotes - 386-4809</i>
Walk-in-Ministry	<i>Monday—Saturday 10 to 11am</i>			<i>Amy Pappageorge - 445-1633</i> <i>Jeff Olson - 383-3154</i> <i>Kathy Russell/Michele Zurakowski - 386-1324</i> <i>Susan Zaruba - 386-1946</i>

Week of October 1				
	Thursday 1	6:30p	Evening Division Dinner	<i>Carole Ferguson</i>
	Saturday 3	9:00a 1:00p	Breakfast Bunch at Maple Tree Dances of Universal Peace	<i>Cindy Palombi</i>

Week of October 4				
	Sunday 4	8:30a 9:00a 9:30a	Church School Leader Breakfast New Member Class Christian Education for All	<i>Marylen Marty-Gentile</i> <i>Mark Buck</i>
		11:00a 12:15p 12:30p 1:30p 6:00p	Quest Worship-World Communion Sunday-Walk to Church Sunday Vision Conversation Adult Education Committee FUJI Apple Picking FUSH Youth Group	<i>Art Spooner/Marylen Marty-Gentile</i> <i>Dick Krissinger</i> <i>William Tweedley</i> <i>Leah Fowler</i> <i>Leah Fowler</i>
	Monday 5	7:00p	Fellowship of Reconciliation	
	Tuesday 6	7:00p	Devotional Faith in Worship Committee Library Committee	<i>Scott Haldeman</i> <i>Cindy Palombi</i>
	Wednesday 7	11:00a	Children's Ministry Committee Weekday Bible Study	<i>Barbara Metric/Andrea Alter</i> <i>Leah Fowler</i>

Week of October 11				
	Sunday 11	8:00a 9:00a 9:30a 9:30a 9:30a 11:00a 6:00p	Congregational Budget Breakfast New Member Class Christian Education for All Quest Vision Conversation Worship Pledge Kick-off Youth Group	<i>Claudette Zobel</i> <i>Mark Buck</i> <i>Art Spooner/Marylen Marty-Gentile</i>
	Tuesday 13	7:00p	Finance Committee Youth Committee Shawl Ministry Communications Committee	<i>Leah Fowler</i> <i>Claudette Zobel</i> <i>Judy Bradeen</i> <i>Elan Long</i> <i>Martha Reese</i>
	Wednesday 14	8:00p	Weekday Bible Study	<i>Leah Fowler</i>
	Thursday 15	11:00a 9:00a 7:00p	Advent Worship Planning Spiritual Guidance Groups	
	Friday 16	9:00a 6:30p	Chicago Presbytery - True North Response Team FUSH (Senior High) Retreat (Oct. 16-18)	<i>Leah Fowler</i>
	Saturday 17	9:00a	Directions at Member's Home	

Week of October 18				
	Sunday 18	9:00a 9:00a	New Member Class Vision Conversation at Members' Homes	<i>Mark Buck</i>
		11:00a 2:00p 6:00p	No Christian Education Today Worship-Baptisms FUSH Retreat Return FUJI Youth Group	<i>Leah Fowler</i>
	Tuesday 20	7:30p	Church Council	<i>Laurie Jolicoeur</i>
	Wednesday 21	11:00a	Weekday Bible Study	<i>Leah Fowler</i>
	Thursday 22	7:00p	Shawl Ministry	<i>Elan Long</i>
	Saturday 24	8:45a	PrimeTime Tour	<i>Marcia Ashton</i>

Week of October 25				
	Sunday 25	8:30a 9:00a 9:30a 9:30a 11:00a 3:00p 4:00p 6:00p	New Member Breakfast New Member/Council Meeting Christian Education for All Quest Worship-Pledge Dedication Sunday-New Member Intro PFLAG OPRF Symphony Concert Youth Groups Vision Conversation with Youth	<i>Mark Buck</i> <i>Art Spooner/Marylen Marty-Gentile</i> <i>Kate Croker</i> <i>Leah Fowler</i>
	Tuesday 27	7:00p	Building & Grounds Committee Personnel Committee Faith in Action Committee New Member Committee Youth Board	<i>John Zaruba</i> <i>Al Parchem</i> <i>Bob Hahn</i> <i>Sue Saliny</i> <i>Leah Fowler</i>
	Wednesday 28	11:00a 6:00p	Weekday Bible Study Dinner and a Movie	<i>Leah Fowler</i> <i>Ted Despotes</i>
	Thursday 29	7:00p	Stewardship Subcommittee	
	Friday 30	7:30p	Midpoint Group	<i>Megan/Justin Lewis</i>
	Saturday 31	11:30a	Quest Trek - Oriental Institute	<i>Art Spooner/Marylen Marty-Gentile</i>

October 2009

Julie R. Harley,
Lead Pastor

Leah Fowler,
*Associate Minister of Youth
and Adult Education*

Marylen Marty-Gentile,
*Director of Children
& Family Ministries*

Mark Buck,
*Interim Associate Pastor for
Membership and Mission*

Jeff Foels,
McCormick Seminary Intern

Bill Chin,
Director of Music Ministry

708.386.5215

Fax: 708.386.7480

office@firstunitedoakpark.com

Thank You!
Thank You!
Thank You!
Thank You!
Thank You!

The FFUN Committee at First United Church would like to thank all the helpers who helped with the Root Beer Float Party on Gathering Sunday, Sept.13. Thanks to the scoopers, the pourers, the table setters, and those who helped with clean-up. Watch for the next FFUN party.

Thank you — The FFUN Committee

**Save
These
Dates**

Thursday, Oct. 4	6:30p	Evening Division Dinner
Sundays, Oct. 4, 11, 18	9:00a	New Member Class
Sunday, Oct. 4	12:15p	Vision Conversation
Wednesdays in Oct.	11:00a	Weekday Bible Study
Sunday, Oct. 11	8:00a	Congregational Budget Breakfast
	9:30a	Vision Conversation
Friday, Oct. 16	6:30p	FUSH (Senior High) Retreat
Sunday, Oct. 18	9:00a	Vision Conversation at Members' Homes
No Christian Education		
Saturday, Oct. 24	8:45a	PrimeTime to Newberry Library
Sunday, Oct. 25	8:30a	New Member Breakfast
	4:00p	OPRF Symphony Concert
	6:00p	Vision Conversation with Youth
Wednesday, Oct. 28	6:00p	Dinner and a Movie
Friday, Oct. 29	7:30p	Midpoint at Lewis' Home
Saturday, Oct. 31	11:30a	Quest Trek to Oriental Institute

**Deadline for the
November 2009 issue is
October 15th.**

*Please e-mail information or
articles for the MB to:*

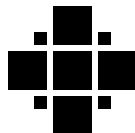
office@firstunitedoakpark.com

909.emorymead

October 2009

848 Lake Street
 Oak Park, Illinois 60301-1314
 708-386-5215
 www.firstunitedoakpark.com

WEB Edition



**FIRST
UNITED
CHURCH**
of Oak Park

*an open community
 united in love
 & justice*