

This writing is inspired by Frederick Buechner about prayer. After some paraphrasing, editing and adding, Connie Wyatt sent it to all email addresses but not all of us have email. So I am including it in this news letter

Everyone prays whether we think of it as praying or not. The odd silence you fall into when something very beautiful is happening - or something very good or very bad. The ah-h-h-h! that floats up out of you. The stammer of pain at someone else's pain. The stammer of joy at someone else's joy. Whatever words or sounds you use for sighing over your own life, these are all prayers in their own way. Whatever else it may or may not be, prayer is at least talking to yourself, and that is not always a bad idea.

Talk to yourself about your own life

Talk about what you've done - what you've failed to do

Talk about who you are - who you wish you were

Talk about who the people you love are - the people you don't love-

Talk to yourself about what matters most to you, because if you don't, you may forget what matters most to you.

Speak truth to yourself.

Even if you don't believe anybody's listening, at least you'll be listening. Know that Somebody is listening. Keep on beating a path to God's door, because the one thing you can be sure of is that down the path you beat, with even your most half-cocked and halting prayer, the God you call upon will come. Even if God does not bring you the answer you want, God will be present. Maybe at the secret heart of all our prayers that is what we are really praying for ...Presence. A Presence that permeates our very being to the marrow and soul.

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Articles for May will be due April 27

Put articles in the Echo box at church or email to me

Eileen Fletcher.

Email address: efletcher@fuse.net

MISSION 4/1 EARTH:



Remember the 50 Great Days in 2013 when we joined with other UCC Congregations to

Green Up Power Down Shout Out for the Earth? We planted 101 trees in cooperation with Metro Parks. The vast majority of the trees made it through the summer and autumn. As expected, a few succumbed to deer. We'll plan a 1 Year Birthday party sometime in April and we are working with Metro Parks to plant more trees. Mark your calendar now for Saturday, April 12. Let your friends know and invite them to dig in with us. Details to follow.

Attention All Shoppers!

If you shop at Gordon Food Service (GFS) don't forget to tell them at checkout that you are shopping for First St. John United Church of Christ. We receive a reward check based on the amount of purchases. Your purchase can be for personal use and we still get credit!

OUTREACH AND MISSIONS

The goal for 2014 and beyond is to involve every member of First St. John UCC in one or more church outreach/mission projects. Involvement may mean financial support, a donation of time, or using your talent(s).

Besides the five UCC special offerings (Our Church's Wider Mission, One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, and the Christmas Fund), First St. John members have reached out through many channels. Look over the following list and identify which one(s) you have been involved with. See if there are others on the list that interest you.

Heifer International – purchasing sheep one quarter at a time

The community dinner

Serve City Meals

American Red Cross

Mission 4/1 Earth

Church World Service

UCC Scarves

Matthew 25 Ministries

Tutoring

Meals on Wheels

Shared Harvest Bulk Mailing help

Lunchtime treats at Partners in Prime

Phone cards for veterans

Re-stocking local food pantries

Shoeboxes

Didn't see your area of interest? Let us know! We can always do more! Let's make First St. John more visible to the community and the rest of the world. Put your time, talent, and treasure to work making God's world a better place for all His children.

Mission and Outreach Team: Donna Burnett, Connie Wyatt, LaVada Fletcher, Megan Sullivan

Called to Care Group

Because there are so many areas to cover concerning our members, the Care Team has been renamed to the Called to Care Group. We now have three separate groups to cover everyone.

PRAYER CIRCLE

Shirley Lovely needs to be contacted to place a person's name on the Prayer Circle list. This will initiate the passing of each person's name through the entire prayer circle, with each Prayer Circle member contacting the next member until all members have been contacted. The last contact will then pass the person's name back to Shirley Lovely to let her know the person's name has passed through the entire Prayer Circle. There are currently twelve callers in the Prayer Circle.

SHUT-IN VISITATION GROUP

Members of this group will be responsible for visiting shut-in members of our congregation. As this group expands, we intend to perform this function geographically, with each group member only having to visit shut-in members in their neighborhood, or at least, close to where the group member lives. We really need more volunteers for this group.

FIRST RESPONSE GROUP

Pastor Mark is often called when a member of congregation has an urgent need for a visit from the pastor. It is sometimes extremely difficult for the pastor to make an immediate appearance, especially since Pastor Mark lives in northern Kentucky and has preparation time and drive time to make a visitation. A member of this First Response Group will visit the member with an urgent need until the pastor is able to get there. This is not intended to be a replacement for the pastor's visit, but simply to comfort and talk to the member with the urgent need until the pastor can get there.

If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Mark or Karen Dalton.

Prayer Circle

Eloise Andrews
Jim Arnold
Lois Apgar
Tom Banfill
Ada Mae Begley
Harold Betz
Payton Cauchran
Linda Chalk
Norma Durr
Bob & LaVada
Fletcher
Myron Gilley
Art Grove
Barbara Harris
Bill & Jean Hurd
Diane Johnson
Vicki Howard
Marilyn Jeffers
Wayne Kaeding

Alex Kip
Tamara Kirkwood
& Twins
Tiffany Mason
Jackie McKinney
Donald Mull
Fanny Murphy
Don Ortolf
Kyle Phelps
Marion Reed
Arlene & Fred
Smith
Doug Stumpf
Tom Theiss
Dave Upchurch
Gartha Webb
Richard Wesp
Vicky Wishart



U.S Armed
Forces &
Their
Families

The Families of

Shirley Hartleb
Elmer & Elaine Weiss
Gilda Moore

Please leave a message for the prayer circle with Shirley. Include the following information: name of person, illness. Thanks, Shirley M. Lovely, 726-6223. Please check names carefully. Shirley .

If there are any names that need to be removed call Shirley Lovely at the number above.



Thank You

Thank you so much for the very generous scholarship. The support I have received from this church will aid me as I pursue my life dream of becoming a nurse anesthetist, I admire so deeply that your church has the heart to give to others and help better their life. It is truly an inspiration and I feel blessed.

Thank you so much, April Browning

To all my friends at FSJ

I just want to say thank you for the scholarship money. It really helps me out and lets me pay for things like textbooks, which are definitely more expensive than I would like. I'm extremely grateful to have all my friends here at FSJ supporting me in this time.

Thank you! Taylor Sullivan

Dear Friends

Bob and I would like to say Thank you for all the prayers, cards, calls and food. It is really appreciated since my fall has me down and unable to do anything around the house at this time. We really appreciate all of our church family

Bob and LaVada Fletcher

Thank You



Dear Members

On behalf of the patients at the Cincinnati VA Medical Center– Fort Thomas Division, I want to thank you for your donation of phone cards for the benefit of our hospitalized Veterans.

Your support has made a difference in many lives and helps to provide our Veterans with the best possible care.

The staff, Veterans, and their families are grateful for your thoughtfulness in remembering them at this time. Thanks again

For your support and donation.

Larie Steinmann for Tracy Butts Chief, Voluntary Service

This note is from the St Luke United Methodist Church in Kokomo, IN

We had a box of white gloves that were used for the bell choir. Since it will be awhile before we have a bell choir, the gloves were donated to the St Luke UMC. This is a thank you from their director.

Thank you so much for thinking of us and blessing our music, ministry here. We really appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Rebecca Short, Director of Music Ministries

Community Dinner Menu

- March** **Chicken Potato Casserole, Salad, Bread, Brownies**
- April** **Meatloaf, Mashed potatoes, & Green Beans**
- May** **Baked Beans & Hot Dogs. Chips, Coleslaw. Brownie**
- June** **Hamburgers, Chips, Potato Salad, Cupcakes**
- July** **Chicken Casserole, Corn, Salad, Strawberry shortcake**
- August** **Breakfast Casserole, Biscuits, Gravy, Fruit Salad**
- September** **Baked Spaghetti, Salad, Garlic Bread, Applesauce**

Our Mission:

To use our individual and congregational gifts, talents and resources to communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ, and to bring to all His word, His healing, His compassion and His forgiveness by being a warm accepting and loving faith community.

The Echo is a publication of First St. John

United Church of Christ

140 Ross Ave., Hamilton, OH 45013

Worship Service: 10:00 a.m. Ballroom Second Floor

Fellowship Time: 9:15 a.m. - 9:50 a.m.

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Connie Wyatt: Office Mgr. Thurs 8:00-11:00

Rev. Mark Young, Pastor 859-663-8994