



ECHO

May-June

2013

From the Pastor

I heard a story once, a parable really, that I was sadly able to identify with quite easily as I worked to lead the congregation I served at that time. The story went something like this:

The people of a small, mid-west town noticed something odd about the pastor of one of the local congregations. It was noticed that every day, at precisely 3:00 pm, he would park his car next to the railroad tracks which ran through the center of town. At precisely 3:09, he would get out of the car, and stand next to the tracks as the 3:10 train made its way across Main Street and on toward the town limits. As soon as the train passed, the pastor would get back in his car and return to his office.

Joe the barber asked him one day, as he cut the pastor's hair, "How long have you been a railroad buff?" The pastor looked at him oddly. "I don't know what you are talking about," he replied. Joe recalled his daily observation of the pastor watching the 3:10 roll through town, and stated how everyone just assumed he was a train lover. The pastor grinned, and sighed a long sigh. He replied to Joe, "No Joe. I'm not that interested in trains. I just like to watch the only thing in town I don't have to push."

Most pastors I have told this story to chuckle with an all too familiar look in their eyes. This seems to be the norm in the church sometimes... at least for many pastors it feels like it. Believe me, I have felt it way too often.

Next Echo deadline : June 23 email to efletchermcnara@fuse.net

But not since God brought me to First St. John!

Seriously! I'm not kidding! I have never in my nearly 20 years in ministry experienced what I am experiencing now at this truly wonderful church!

Let me explain....

I happened to mention one day after worship how nice it would be if we could connect with the UCC's "Rainbow Scarf Project" in preparation for the Synod rally against bullying. All I did was mention it... Done.

I happened to point out that The UCC was promoting an initiative called "Mission 4/1 Earth", calling on congregations to explore and claim care for the environment as a spiritual issue. 101 trees later... Done!

I happened to point out that the SONKA Global Partnership Team was having trouble raising the last \$15,000 for a clean water system in Rubate Kenya, and it would be a bold move to offer a challenge grant to the churches of SONKA to finish the project. A \$7,500 challenge, and \$9,000 response later... Done!

There is such a generous spirit, such a sacred energy, such an openness and willingness to serve at FSJ that I believe we can do ANYTHING we set our minds and hearts to do. I was told when we first met that the future of this congregation was unsure at best. ***I don't believe it.***

At a special meeting of the council this past week, all council members enthusiastically affirmed the desire to build a future and begin exploring God's plans for our church. Let it be known, First St. John United Church of Christ in Hamilton, OH ain't done yet!

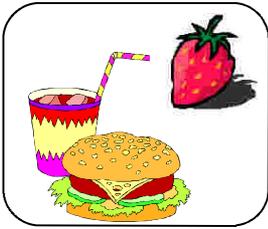
In the months ahead, we will be challenged by some new ways of understanding our faith, new ways of being the church, and new ways of reaching out to the world around us in Christ's name. Don't worry... we will proceed with care, and nothing near and dear to our hearts will be left behind. But we do need to get to work!

The very first, and most important task in the renewal of the church is for EVERYONE to commit to fervent and faithful prayer. Unless we abide in prayer, we cannot even dream of renewal. But, relying on God's grace and immersing ourselves in prayer, we can not only dream, but we can dream God's Dream for the future of First St. John!

I love my Job! Mark

Upcoming Event

June 23, 2013



Strawberry Festival After Church

Hamburgers with the fixin's

\$ 3.00

Strawberries and ice cream

\$ 3.00

Opportunities for Service - SIGN UP NOW

Here is an opportunity for you to serve your church with very little effort. You can assist with the Liturgy, Hospitality and Refreshments for August thru December. If you attend church and come for the Social Hour now is your chance to do a service for your church. Hospitality is just a matter of sitting at a table and greeting people as they come in and make sure they have what is needed for the service that day. These are easy and rewarding services for FSJ

Sign up at the welcome table as you enter the worship area.

First St. John is now active on Facebook for updates, conversation, feedback, pictures and general communication. Be sure to "Like" us and encourage your other FB Friends to do so. It's just another way to stay in touch during the week.



Dates to Remember

Graduation Sunday - June 2nd - Please let the church office know by May 20th if you have any graduates in your family.

Anyone interested in going to the following activities, please see Virginia Robertson or Sally Ortolf **by 5/12** .

- Bier Haus - May 18, 2013 @5:00 (need reservations)
- Dayton Dragon's Game - July 21, 2013 @ 2;00.

Cost \$11.00 per person.

a person.

Christmas in July

When: Saturday, July 13th

Where: Redeemer Church

What: Dinner, entertainment, silent auction

Why: To benefit Serve City

Who: First St. John will have at least one table of 8 again this year

Cost is \$10 per person. See Connie Wyatt or Donna Burnett for more information.



May Prayer Circle

Eloise Andrews
Jim Arnold
Ada Mae Begley
Mel Brown
Payton Cauchran
Linda Chalk
Merle DePew
Norma Durr
Clay Frink
Myron Gilley
Imogene Goos
Don Harley
Fanny Murphy
Kyle Phelps
Diane Johnson
Martha Herold
Vicki Howard
Judy Huff
Marilyn Jeffers
Alex Kip

Kitty
Tamara Kirkwood
& Twins
Jackie McKinney
Dedee Martin
Gilda Moore
Donald Mull
Marion Reed
Gina Robertson
Jane
Joseph Selkirk
Bryan Selkirk
Ruth Kerby Sibert
Fred Smith
Dave Upchurch
Gartha Webb
Elaine Weiss
Richard Wesp
Patricia Young



U.S Armed
Forces &
Their
Families

The Families of
Janet Filbeck
Irma Justice

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. If there are any names that need to be removed call Shirley .



To my family of First St. John

I would like to thank you all so much for the scholarship money! It helps me pay for those fun college expenses like tuition and textbooks.

I would also just like to say thank you to everyone for the support that has been extended to Megan and I during our parent's move to NC. It means a lot to us. Again thank you! Taylor Sullivan

Friends at First St. John

Thank you so much for your generous scholarship for this term! It was a great help in buying books for school and for paying rent. I would also like to thank you for your continued prayers and support for my family as my parents moved. Taylor and I appreciate all you do very much! Megan Sullivan

First St John UCC

Thank you for all of your prayers and cards. Our church family means a lot to us.

Virginia, Daniel, Zachary, Sarah, Lucas and Hannah

Thanks to everyone for all the birthday cards. I really appreciated getting them and miss every one very much. Jackie McKinney



Dear Friends

Thank you for your generous support of the varied ministries of the United Church of Christ. Your generosity enables me to report that the overall level of SONKA giving 2012 matched that of 2011.

On a daily basis the Association is contacted by clergy and laity alike who are seeking help with a variety of issues ranging from the search and call process to finding resources for specific projects. The Association is also the “go-to-place”.

May God lead us and bless us in the ministry we do together.

Rev. Kathryn Anadein

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the Board, the employees and volunteers of The Open Door Food Pantry, I would like to thank you for your donations during 2012. It is through the support of friends like you that we are able to continue to pursue our mission of serving the poor and needy of the community.

David Schul, President

To the Ladies of First St John

Thank you for the donation of the beautiful blankets and quilts you made for patients in our hospital. The colors and patterns were bright and cheery? Your generous contribution offers Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center the ability to provide our patients with a caring and loving atmosphere while away from home.

Your gift helps make a difference in the lives of our patients and families.

Sincerely, Rose Lytle

Dear Friends and Family,

R.T. and I have been tremendously blessed. We have been attending our home church, Davidson Baptist Church, on a regular basis where we have met many friends. The Lord has blessed us with good health and many opportunities to serve Him. One such opportunity is working with the teenagers in the church and community. We have found enthusiasm and dedication among many of these young people. Our youth pastor has planned a mission's trip to Costa Rica in June of this year. Presently, the plans are to take 11 young people from our church on this trip for exposure to foreign missions. R.T. and I have been praying about the opportunity to go also as chaperones. While in Costa Rica we will be doing projects while we are there.

We hope that you are doing well and are enjoying the blessings of the Lord in your life. We would sincerely appreciate your prayers on behalf of us and this group.. Our major desire is that we are doing God's will. We feel there is NO greater joy than to see a person receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and seeing a joyous smile on their face. In His Grip. R.T. and Kelly Barker

Dear Friends in Christ,

It was so awesome to receive your gift to us of \$250 for our missions trip to Costa Rica. There are 11 of us going, mostly high school and college students. We will be conducting Bible schools, doing skits and working on the property there. We leave Kentucky on June 10th, and return on June 21st. Thank you so much for sharing in our ministry. God Bless You

R.T. and Kelly Barker



Here are some quotes from MetroPark from the Mission 4/1 Earth Tree Planting

“Thank you so much for the efforts of First St. John Mission Earth Tree Planting and the great planning and coordination that made the project successful. Thanks too for the donation of trees, stakes and posts. Generations will benefit from your labor and generosity.”

Cristy Carter-Trammell, Volunteer Coordinator,
MetroParks of Butler County

“I’m glad everything went well. The day turned out to be a beautiful and great day for planting. Don’t worry about the Redbuds, the Sassafras will do just as well. We will be watering trees today and finish up the larger Red Oak with mulch also. One again, I’d like to thank you for your time and efforts in this project.

I look forward to working with you in more tree Plantings in the future. Thank you!!” J

oe Morrison, Park Manager, West Zone

Dear Friends,

The strength of Partners in Prime is reflected in people like you who care. Not because you have to, but because you want to.

We thank you for including PIP as one of your Missions. Your gift of \$1,000 in support of our PIP transportation campaign helps sustain our transportation service. Please know your gift touches many life.

Thank you for seeing us as an important local mission.

F. Stephen Schnabl

May 2013

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

Sundays 9:00 Adult Class 9:15 Fellowship time 10:00 Worship		1	2	3	4	
5 Just Friends After Worship	6	7	8	9	10	11 Build the Walls CCMason
12 9:20 Worship Team Mother's Day	13 6:00 Serve City Kramer-Burnett	14	15	16	17	18 5:00 Bier Haus
19 Council after worship	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 6:00 Community Meal	28	29	30	31	

June 2013

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

Sundays 9:15 Fellowship time 10:00 Worship						1
2 Graduation Sunday	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 9:20 Worship Team Just Friends After worship	10 6:00 Serve City Burnett- Bogan	11	12	13	14	15
16 Father's Day	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 Strawberry Festival	24 6:00 Community Meal	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Community Dinner Menu

May	Little Hot Dogs, Baked Beans, Potato Chips, Coleslaw, Brownies
June	Hamburgers on Buns, Potato Chips, Potato Salad, Cake
July	Chicken Casserole, Corn, Salad, Strawberry Shortcake
August	Baked Spaghetti, Salad, Garlic Bread, Applesauce
September	Ham, Green Beans, Potatoes, Cornbread, Sugar Cookies
October	Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, Bread, Cake
November	Breakfast Casserole, Biscuits, Fruit Salad
December	Pot Luck

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.

Web Page: fsjchurch.org Office Mgr.: Connie Wyatt