



ECHO

Issue 9-11

September-
October
2011

From the Pastors Desk

Church Fatigue?

The New York Times recently ran an article entitled, "Are You Suffering From Decision Fatigue?" The article summarizes what we all know. Modern life is complicated. We go through each day making decision after decision after decision. Easy decisions like what to wear today. Conflictual decisions such as what is the best curfew for my teenager. Financial decisions like which bills to pay this month? Emotionally gut wrenching decisions like should I stay in this marriage? Quality of life decisions such as do I stay in my home or go to assisted living? End of life decisions – is it time to call hospice? It's enough to drive us over the edge or what the writer calls "Decision Fatigue".

All of this made me think of First St. John UCC. Are we suffering from church decision fatigue? Council meeting and team meetings are an endless list of decisions to be made. Small churches probably make the same number of monthly decisions as large churches: Who does this? Who does that? How do we pay for this and how do we pay for that? The difference is that in small churches the number of decision makers is much smaller and the consequences of the decisions are much greater. In small churches our decisions often seem like life and death. Is this the month we make the wrong decision and cause the death of the church?

The NY Times article points out that decision fatigue often causes us to confabulate small decisions into matters of life and death (in reality they are not). This causes physical, emotional and spiritual distress. It's not surprising that the word "decide" comes from the same Latin word as "homicide" and "suicide" to kill or cut down. Endless decision making can seem like the death of a thousand cuts.

I confess! I am suffering from "Church Fatigue". I am not alone. I see it in the eyes of council members and team leaders who work tirelessly so we can have a nice church. We have too few people willing to serve on council. At the same time, the decisions made by council are becoming more difficult with greater consequences (often met with criticism by those who choose not to serve). The article tells us what we all know. When we are mentally depleted we become entrenched in our own point of view, short tempered with those around us and vulnerable to irrationality. In other words we become our own worst enemy. We either make bad decisions or we become stuck and make no decision at all. With every bad decision and no decision the feelings of fatigue becomes greater and greater.

The Articles for November-December are due October 22

You can email them to: efletchermcnamara@fuse.net

Eileen Fletcher or put them in the Echo box in the hanging folder mail box.

Email address is on back of this newsletter

What are we to do? Maybe we should be more willing to take a break from decision making. Many churches use the summer as a break from council and committee meetings but it does not have to be summer. We can take a sabbatical in the fall or winter. After all, we are here to worship God not determine the fate of FSJ. We need to spread the decision making around. Maybe we should ask the congregation to vote on more church matters. Perhaps change the time of council meetings. The aforementioned article makes it clear that it is easier to make good decisions in the morning than in the evening. The article puts it this way: "Even the wisest persons won't make good choices when they are tired and their glucose is low". Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Don't ask someone to do a job you can do. Let's look for ways to give positive feedback (give a little praise). Let go and trust God. Look for ways to put God back into our meetings. Have a little fun and let's remember the weight of the world is not really on our shoulders.

Pastor Sam



Food Drive September—December

With the holidays coming the Food Banks in the area need our help to replenish their shelves.

Starting in September we will be collecting non perishable food items to help with this need.

They also need cleaning supplies and paper goods.

You can drop off your items in the box located near the Welcome Table.

Thanks First St. John for your help, God Bless each of you



September

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 10:00 Worship	5	6	7. 9:00am Happy Stitchers 5:30 R&A	8	9	10 3:00 Picnic Ortolf's
11 9:00 Adult class 10:00 Worship	12 6:00 Serve City	13	14 9:00 Happy Stitchers	15	16	17
18 9:00 Adult class 10:00 Worship	19	20 6:30 Council	21 9:00 Happy Stitchers	22	23	24
25 9:00 Adult class 10:00 Worship	26 6:00 Commu. Meal	27	28 9:00 Happy Stitchers	29	30	

October

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 8
2 9:00 Adult class 10:00 Worship	3	4	5 9:00 Happy Stitchers	6	7	15
9 9:00 Adult class 10:00 Worship	10 6:00 Serve City	11	12 9:00 Happy Stitchers	13	14	22
16 9:00 Adult class 10:00 Worship	17	18 6:30 Council	19 9:00 Happy Stitchers	20	21	29
23 9:00 Adult class 10:00 Worship	24	25	26 9:00 Happy Stitchers	27	28	
30 9:00 Adult class 10:00 Worship	31 6:00 Commu. Meal					



140 Ross Ave.
Hamilton, Ohio 45013

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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.

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Calendar & Activity Page Connie Wyatt

Birthdays Lelia Kinner

Sunday Schedule:

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.
Ballroom Second Floor
Fellowship Time 11:00-11:30

Church Office: 140 Ross Ave.
Hamilton OH 45013

Office Hours: Thursday,
8.00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

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Music Director Susan Ha

Office Manager Connie Wyatt

WELCOME SUSAN C. HA

While we were sad to see Cully Bell leave us after a short two year stint as pianist/choir director, we are happy for him in his new career in Illinois. He will be teaching at Southern Illinois U. We welcome Susie Ha as our new pianist/choir director beginning Sept. 1, 2011. Susie Ha is not a complete stranger to First St. John, because she has substituted for both Kristal and Cully.

She is from northern Virginia and came to Cincinnati in 2007 to start pursuing her Master of Music in piano at University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. She currently holds a Master of Music in Piano from UC and a Bachelor of Music Cum Laude in Piano Performance from James Madison University. Susie is in the third year of her doctoral degree program in piano at CCM. Susie states "I am very excited to start working with First St. John UCC and the choir especially. Most of my time is spent on practicing and teaching the piano. Some other interests include eating healthy, listening to good music, and jogging."

She has experience at other churches as accompanist and cherub choir director and has also taught piano at a variety of places. Susie has won a number of piano competitions and had an article published in the January issue of 2011 Group Piano Pedagogy Online Journal. We are very fortunate that she will be joining the FSJ staff and hope she will feel welcomed by the congregation. Please welcome Susie on her first day with us – September 4.

Choir practice will resume after worship on Sunday, Sept. 4th. The choir practices after worship on the 1st and 2nd Sundays of each month and performs during worship on the 2nd and 3rd Sundays. We welcome all who would like to join us. You don't have to be an accomplished singer. All it takes is a little time and a love of music. Surely God appreciates the effort and forgives any off-key notes.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

The Adult Bible Study class will start up again on Sunday, Sept. 11th. We meet in the Wellness Room across from the ballroom at 9:00 a.m. We will continue the study of II Corinthians, then begin looking at the book of John. The group is small and informal. All are welcome. Why not plan to join us this year? We value diverse input and would love to have yours. See Donna Burnett or any class member for more information



September

- 3 Sally Ortolf
- 5 Tom Weber
- 6 Don Jackson
- 7 Charlotte Hermann
- 15 Rosann Westall
- 17 Bill Hiesmier
- 18 Ruth Brown
- 20 Mark Bradenburger
Craig Boell
- 22 Audri Hilsmier
- 23 Susan Hoppe
- 24 Carrie Hann
- 26 Jonathan Grimes
- 27 Beth Hartleb
- 30 NaDeen Hartleb

October

- 8 Eloise Andrew
Annette Sullivan
- 14 Judy McCalley
Ken Profitt
- 15 Irma Oaklets
Jeff Sullivan
- 17 Debbie Evans
- 20 Samantha Freels
- 23 Lucas Robertson
- 28 Kathy Vizedom

Did you know?

- ◆ The church office is open on a scheduled basis Thursday mornings 8:00-11:00 only.
- ◆ Someone is in the office in addition to the hours above, but times vary.
- ◆ The phone is checked for messages at least once per day, Monday -Friday.
- ◆ The church has a mailbox in Partners in Prime's Business Office (first floor). It is open Mon – Fri 9-5.
- ◆ You can find the Echo on our webpage www.fschurch.org.
- ◆ You can find pictures of past events and download documents on our webpage.
- ◆ You can still call the church, a council person, or Pastor Sam.

September Prayer Circle



Eloise Andrews
 Vernon Arnold
 Ira Ash
 Ada Mae Begley
 Jack Berling
 Gary Booth
 Payton Cauchran
 Linda Chalk
 Bill Coffey
 Jack DuVall
 Anna Dudley
 Fred Gaw
 Rachel Gonde
 Larry Hancock

Vicki Howard
 Caroline Kerby
 Alex Kip
 Becky Lawson
 Doug Little
 Patty Marcum
 Jackie McKinney
 Susan Ortolf
 June Pierce
 Michelle Schoonover
 Griffin Shea
 Marsha Smart
 Karen Spencer
 Marie Wurzbach

The Family of

Bob Herold

U.S Armed Forces & Their Families

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

Greetings to all of you and a huge thank you for allowing Anna and me to share about Rubate. It is a phenomenal project within SONKA and the only one we all participate in. The morning was delightful for us; you have a very warm congregation and they had many questions at coffee hour about SONKA and Rubate. Blessings to you on your work in Hamilton.

Lollie Kasulones

Dear Members of First St John UCC

Thank you so much for your recent gift of \$250 that we received, July 13. Your donation will make a tangible difference in the lives of the people we serve.

On behalf of the Mercy Franciscan at St Raphael clients and staff, thank you again for your thoughtful and generous gift.

Sincerely,
Terry L. Perdue
Executive Director
Mercy Franciscan at St. Raphael



Dear Congregational Members

On behalf of TriState Habitat for Humanity, I would like to thank you for your recent donation of \$1000 which we receive August 9. Because of your contribution, we will be able to continue to build simple, decent and affordable homes for low income families in need of a hand up.

Our 2011 build season kicked off recently with the start of a new home in Batavia, OH. We will also be building in Northern Kentucky, Indiana, Trenton, Hamilton, Lebanon and Oxford in Ohio! This is only possible because of thoughtful contributions from people like you. We are anticipating a great year ahead!

Again, thank you for your generosity and helping us succeed in our mission.

Sincerely
Natalie Nuce
Resource Development Officer
TriState Habitat for Humanity

Committees and Congregation,

Once again, I would like to thank you for generously providing scholarship money for my education. I am incredibly blessed to have been part of this church family the past 20 years! Thank you for all of your support, prayer, and care! I greatly appreciate every contribution.

Again, thank you,
Megan Sullivan

Dear First St John

Than you so much for the scholarship. It will help me so much in the near future with my college degree. I really appreciate the help that you have given to me, so that I can follow my dreams of becoming a nursing home administrator.

Thanks,
Alex Vizecom

First St John UCC

Bunker Hill Haven for Boys Greatly appreciates your donation. The residents will enjoy some recreation activities that we wouldn't have been able to do because of budget constraints.

Thank You!

Bunker Hill Haven



Dear First St John

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

Your of \$1,000 in support of our Partners in Prime transportation campaign helps sustain our transportation service. Please know your gift touches many lives.

Partners in Prime transportation enables many folks to keep medical appointments, reach kidney dialysis centers, get to pharmacies and the supermarket. Your gift helps define the difference between independence and dependence. You have to feel good about that. I do.

With warm thanks and appreciation

F. Stephen Schnabl
Chief Executive Officer