No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow.

~Proverb
Beloved First Church family,

As a new year dawns, Steven and I wish you a blessed 2018!

I love the way the liturgical calendar keeps us celebrating Christmas for 12 days, right through January 6th, when we celebrate Epiphany. Deeply embedded in this time-honored tradition seems to be a gentle reminder that Jesus came not just for one time, but for all time, not just for a celebration on one day of the year, but throughout the year. It’s a simple thought, really, but one that has profound implications.

As we enter 2018, I want us as a church to consider again the joy of Jesus' birth and life, and what it means for each of us individually and for us as a community. I would like to invite each of us and our whole church family to get back to the basics of what it means to be a follower of the Way of Jesus the Christ.

Forget for a moment all of the tasks - joyful or burdensome - that so-called "church work" entails. Set aside your attachments to a building, a particular committee or activity, a specific way of doing things and embrace the challenge of putting growth in faith first. That's what I'd like to challenge us to do when I invite us all to get back to basics: let's put growth in faith as our top priority.

This invitation is to hone our prayer lives (as developed or undeveloped as we feel they may be) by intentionally setting aside time to commune with God. It's an invitation to take up the scriptures yet again and to mine the Bible for new insights in how to live. It's an invitation to gather afresh as a community that proclaims Christ as its head and then to follow where Christ leads.

Let 2018 be the year we get back to the barebones of our faith and enjoy the blessed opportunity to be on this journey together, knowing that God is truly with us, that Jesus shows us the way, and that we enter this new year in the power of the Holy Spirit.

What an adventure 2018 promises to be! Are you in?

Grace and peace,

Nanette
From the Desk of Karen Bruno  
Interim Church School Director

Did you know we have 28 children registered for Church School? There are an additional 4 toddlers who attend regularly.

That is wonderful news! But we are in need of additional help in the classrooms. Please consider volunteering in any of the areas listed below.

Starting in January we need:

1. Two Church School teachers
2. Three Substitute Teachers
3. Church School Helpers - to be the second adult in the classrooms
4. Nursery/Toddler Room Helpers

If you would like to be a part of this amazing ministry to our children, please contact Rev. Karen at 330-329-9277 or email karen.bruno@akronfcc.org. Thank you!

Welcome Mark Peterson  
Interim Choir Director and Organist

We are pleased to welcome Mark Peterson who will begin serving as our Interim Choir Director and Organist on Sunday, January 7, 2018.

Mark studied music from an early age in Iowa, assuming his first church post at Mayflower Congregational Church in Sioux City at the age of 15. Educated at St. Olaf College and the University of Iowa, Mark did graduate work at Cambridge University. Mark held positions at the Cathedral Church of St. Mark in Minneapolis, House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul, and moved to New York City to assume the position of Assistant Organist and Music Department Administrator at Trinity Church Wall Street. He subsequently held interim posts at the historic Congregational church, Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims in Brooklyn, and the Church of St. James the Less in Scarsdale. Mark capped his East Coast experience as Director of Music and Organist at the renowned Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Times Square, also in New York.

Relocating to the Akron area this past summer, Mark is happy to be amongst Midwesterners again, and is thrilled to live in the natural beauty that constitutes the Valley.

If you would like to contact Mark, you can email him at mark.peterson@akronfcc.org or call him at the church office at 330-253-5109. Welcome, Mark!
Wednesday Nights at First Church!
Winter programming begins on January 10, 2018

6:00-6:30pm Dinner in the Fellowship Hall
Dinner - pay at the door; cost $8.00
Reservations a Must - Sign up in the Office or Fellowship Hall by the prior Monday by noon.

6:45-8:00pm Faith Enrichment
Please see schedule below.

6:45-8:00 pm Wednesday Night at the Movies!
If you enjoy thought-provoking, insightful and entertaining cinema, your ticket is Wednesday Night at the Movies. Discussion follows the movie. Look for a brief description of the movies in News & Notes of the Sunday Bulletin each week. Questions, call Bernie Babb (330-687-0823). This is a fun evening and we hope you will join us in the Theater Room.

Faith Enrichment on Wednesdays
January 10 through 31
10:45am - noon and 6:45-8:00pm

The concept of My One Word: Change Your Life With Just One Word by Mike Ashcraft and Rachel Olsen is simple: lose the long list of resolutions - all your sweeping promises to change - and do something about one thing this year instead of nothing about everything. Choose just one word that represents what you most hope God will do in you, and focus on it for an entire year. This single act will force clarity and concentrate your efforts. As you focus on your word over an extended period of time, you position yourself for God to form your character at a deep, sustainable level. Growth and change will result.

If you have not already purchased the book, copies may be ordered online or at your favorite bookstore. Then join Pastor Karen Bruno on Wednesdays for a Faith Enrichment series, January 10-31, 2018, focused on applying My One Word. Each gathering will begin with a 20-minute video by the author followed by discussion.

You are welcome to attend some or all sessions, as you are able.

Yoga for Everyone!
Yoga class meets on Wednesdays beginning January 10 at 5:30pm in the Chapel with Larry Ott, instructor. Cost is $5.00 per person. All are welcome!
Stewardship & Finance Board

Stewardship/Finance Report (unaudited)
November 2017 - Final

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>YTD Budget</th>
<th>Percent to Budget</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017 Loyalty Campaign</td>
<td>14,130</td>
<td>243,538</td>
<td>252,092</td>
<td>96.61%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-pledge Income</td>
<td>2,681</td>
<td>31,621</td>
<td>50,418</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Ministries-includes Special Offering</td>
<td>2,480</td>
<td>45,111</td>
<td>34,156</td>
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<tr>
<td>Endowment, Sprowls Trust, Pollock</td>
<td>44,655</td>
<td>504,529</td>
<td>499,011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>3,183</td>
<td>48,405</td>
<td>31,256</td>
<td>154.87%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>70,450</td>
<td>944,714</td>
<td>866,933</td>
<td>107.22%</td>
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</table>

Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>YTD</th>
<th>YTD Budget</th>
<th>Percent to Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Admin. &amp; Support</td>
<td>4,099</td>
<td>66,001</td>
<td>99,379</td>
<td>66.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Mission</td>
<td>4,981</td>
<td>71,293</td>
<td>72,832</td>
<td>97.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Service Expense</td>
<td>3,987</td>
<td>39,971</td>
<td>16,271</td>
<td>245.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>24,110</td>
<td>315,350</td>
<td>426,448</td>
<td>73.95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Property Expenses</td>
<td>27,904</td>
<td>214,239</td>
<td>255,823</td>
<td>83.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>65,081</td>
<td>706,854</td>
<td>870,753</td>
<td>81.18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

January Mission of the Month

The Board of Christian Outreach has selected First Glance as the January Mission of the Month. First Glance is a youth center that operates in Akron’s Kenmore community on Kenmore Blvd. Their programs are designed for students from grades 6 to 12 and for young adults ages 18 to 29. They include a recreational night, a young adults program, an assistance program, Teen Mom and Young Moms programs. Please make your check payable to First Church with “First Glance” written on the memo line. Thank you for your donation.

Mission of the Month Update

The November Mission of the Month was the United Church of Christ Christmas Fund. A total amount of $600 was given to this mission.

Feed the Hungry

We join with the Love Truck and serve a warm meal to the hungry and homeless each week. We serve a meal on Saturdays at 4:30pm and are looking for volunteers to help set-up the Fellowship Hall, make coffee, serve food, and clean up from 3:30–6:30pm. Please consider helping with this outreach program and sign up in the church office. Thank you!

The Love Truck

We are collecting clean, plastic food containers, used or new, and plastic grocery bags for The Love Truck. Please drop off items in the church office.

Mason CLC Christmas Family Outreach

On behalf of the Mason Outreach Program, Mina Riazi, Emily Mosconi, Linda Hultz, and I extend a HUGE THANK YOU TO FIRST CHURCH MEMBERS AND FRIENDS WHO: 1) adopted Mason families and provided wonderful Christmas gifts to the children in those families; 2) selected ornaments from our Christmas trees in Fellowship Hall to help make a special wish come true for our beautiful Mason children and/or: 3) made a donation to be used in our Mason Christmas Program. Our mission would not be successful without YOU! We are truly a blessed church community. THANK YOU!

We wish you and the people special to your heart a very Happy New Year!

Maggie Grigsby

Food Cupboard Update

Food Cupboard Volunteers are needed on most Mondays to receive cases of items delivered from the Foodbank and put them in stacks on pallets in the Food Cupboard. If you are available from 8:30–10:00am and may be interested, please contact Clay or Debbie Canfield at 334-678-6754 for more information and dates needed. Thank you!

Homeless Outreach

Homeless Outreach, a federal program through Community Support Services, Inc., is collecting new and used blankets, coats, gloves, hiking boots and shoes for local homeless men and women. Please bring items to the church office. Thank you for your support.
In Our Prayers
Karen Foley
George Kostan
Cecil Larabee
Linda Marston
Elsie Oldfield
Duane Peterson
Lee Pritchard
Larry Reed
Rev. Bill Rodefer
Agneta Solomon
Doug Weyrick

In Sympathy
Our sympathy and prayers are with the following families:

To Pat Sites and family on the passing of Jack Sites on December 4. A memorial service was held on December 21 in the Great Hall at Concordia at Sumner in Copley. The Rev. Nanette Pitt officiated at the service.

To Victoria Leach and family on the passing of her grandmother, Mary Meyer, on December 9. The Rev. Nanette Pitt officiated a graveside service on December 16.

Men’s Lunch Bunch
The Men’s Lunch Bunch meets on Mondays starting January 8 at 12:00pm for lunch and a program. Cost of the meal is $7.00. All men of the church are invited. Please sign up in the Fellowship Hall. For more information, please contact Howard Tolley, 330-867-1469.

Women’s Spiritual Journey
Women’s Spiritual Journey meets on the first and third Monday of each month at 12:00pm for lunch, conversation, and study. For more information, please contact Linda Peshina, 330-628-9137.

Pork and Beans for Open M
Thank you so very much for your generous contributions to Open M’s holiday baskets! I delivered 210 large cans of pork and beans on Monday, November 27. Our church always comes through!
Sue Godard

Blood Pressure & Diabetes Checks
January 21
To contact Pastor Nanette, you can call 330-253-5109 ext. 111 (church), 330-907-1050 (cell) or email her at nanette.pitt@akronfcc.org.

Greater Akron Martin Luther King Coalition Celebration - January 14, 2018
Greater Akron Martin Luther King Coalition Celebration, Sunday, January 14 from 5-7pm will be held at the Islamic Society of Akron and Kent, 152 E. Steels Corners Road, Cuyahoga Falls. Join us for this historic community worship service bringing neighbors together from across Akron.

Sunday Worship Flowers
If you would like to donate worship flowers on January 21, or March 4, 18, or 25, or other available dates in 2018, please call Patty Gillespie at 330-253-5109.

Thanks to our January Ushers

Baby Congratulations!
Congratulations to Jessica and Scott Fox on the birth of their baby, Noah Andrew Fox, born on December 9, 2017 and to the very proud grandparents Jamie and Mike Brink!

Welcome New Members
On December 10, we welcomed Sandy and Bob Kaenan into our First Church family! Sandy is retired and she enjoys quilting and reading. Bob works in sales and in his spare time, he enjoys reading, working around the house, and tile work. Sandy and Bob transferred their membership from First Congregational Church of Albuquerque, New Mexico. They enjoy attending the 11am worship. Welcome, Sandy and Bob!

Special Called Congregational Meeting
January 7, 2018
First Congregational Church will hold a special called meeting of the congregation on Sunday, January 7, 2018, in the Meetinghouse, immediately following the 11:00 am worship service.

The purpose of this meeting is to vote on the 2018 budget, to vote on Larry Becker as the new Vice Moderator and to vote on Curt Clemons as the new Treasurer.

A minimum of 64 members must be present to have a quorum so we can do the voting.

Looking forward to your presence and participation.
Chip Houghton
Moderator

Holiday Closing
The church and office will be closed on January 15, 2018.
## CHURCH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### January 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Happy New Year</strong></td>
<td><strong>Church Closed</strong></td>
<td>9:30am-11:30am</td>
<td><strong>Food Cupboard</strong></td>
<td><strong>AA Meeting</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>Communion</strong></td>
<td>12:00 Noon</td>
<td><strong>Men’s Lunch Bunch</strong></td>
<td><strong>AA Meeting</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>Church Closed</strong></td>
<td>9:30am-11:30am</td>
<td><strong>Food Cupboard</strong></td>
<td><strong>5:30pm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prayer Blankets</strong></td>
<td><strong>Joy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>Church Closed</strong></td>
<td>9:30am-11:30am</td>
<td><strong>Food Cupboard</strong></td>
<td><strong>5:30pm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prayer Blankets</strong></td>
<td><strong>Joy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>Church Closed</strong></td>
<td>12:00 Noon</td>
<td><strong>Faith Enrichment</strong></td>
<td><strong>12:00 Noon</strong></td>
<td><strong>AA Meeting</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>Church Closed</strong></td>
<td>9:30am-11:30am</td>
<td><strong>Food Cupboard</strong></td>
<td><strong>5:30pm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Handbells</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>Church Closed</strong></td>
<td>10:45am</td>
<td><strong>Faith Enrichment</strong></td>
<td><strong>12:00 Noon</strong></td>
<td><strong>AA Meeting</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>Church Closed</strong></td>
<td><strong>5:30pm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yoga</strong></td>
<td><strong>6:00pm Dinner</strong></td>
<td><strong>(reservations please!)</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>Church Closed</strong></td>
<td><strong>6:45pm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Faith Enrichment</strong></td>
<td><strong>6:45pm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Movies</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
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<td><strong>16</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5:30pm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prayer Blankets</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>12:00 Noon</strong></td>
<td><strong>AA Meeting</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>Church Closed</strong></td>
<td><strong>5:30pm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Handbells</strong></td>
<td><strong>5:30pm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yoga</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
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<td><strong>19</strong></td>
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<td><strong>6:00pm Dinner</strong></td>
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<td><strong>6:00pm Dinner</strong></td>
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<td><strong>6:45pm Faith Enrichment</strong></td>
<td><strong>6:45pm Faith Enrichment</strong></td>
<td><strong>6:45pm Faith Enrichment</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>Church Closed</strong></td>
<td>12:00 Noon</td>
<td><strong>Men’s Lunch Bunch</strong></td>
<td><strong>AA Meeting</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>Church Closed</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5:30pm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prayer Blankets</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>Church Closed</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chronicle Mailing</strong></td>
<td><strong>10:45am</strong></td>
<td><strong>Faith Enrichment</strong></td>
<td><strong>12:00 Noon</strong></td>
<td><strong>AA Meeting</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Church Closed</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>Church Closed</strong></td>
<td>12:00 Noon</td>
<td><strong>Food Cupboard</strong></td>
<td><strong>5:30pm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Handbells</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
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<td><strong>27</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Food Cupboard</strong></td>
<td><strong>5:30pm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yoga</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
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<td><strong>28</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Food Cupboard</strong></td>
<td><strong>5:30pm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yoga</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
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<td><strong>29</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>Church Closed</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Food Cupboard</strong></td>
<td><strong>5:30pm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prayer Blankets</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
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<td><strong>12:00 Noon</strong></td>
<td><strong>AA Meeting</strong></td>
<td><strong>MM</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Please Note:** Any calendar information is subject to change after printing.
Please join us in wishing these JANUARY 2018 BIRTHDAYS a “HAPPY BIRTHDAY”!!

If we have the wrong date or have omitted anyone, please let us know.

1  Stacey Hansford
   Ashley Limbach
   Kevin Thom
   Cecil Larabee
2  Jennifer Kowalski
3  Chip Houghton
   Kappy Sarver
4  Elly Mackus
   Kimberly O’Connor
9  William Babcox
   Robert Funk
10 Stephanie Corbin
11 Julie Brandy
12 Barbara Eby
13 Helen Lombard
15 Samuel Corbin
17 Nadia Abouraya
   Molly Meyer
18 Janice Moore
19 Larry Becker
20 Karen Ballard
   Geraldine Corbin
   Michael Ledger
   Linda Marston
   Joanne Mazzaferro
   Judy Mills
21 Henry Beazlie
   Cynthia Nygaard
22 Mary Armstrong
23 Paul DiMascio
   Deb Dockery
25 James Donald Sr.
   Sandra Kreiner
26 Erica Barnes
   Donna Davis
   Lilia Dudas
27 Jamie Brink
   Linda Houghton
29 Erica Powell
   Tiffany Thorne
30 Duane Angel
   Tammy Buser
   Kari Ledger
   Jenna Richter