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Sunday Worship

9:30am - Learning Ctr.
11am - Meetinghouse

Sermon Schedule:

January 7

Communion Sunday Festival of Epiphany

9:30am & 11am
Deuteronomy 6:1-9
Romans 12:1-8

January 14

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Celebration Sunday

9:30am & 11am

January 21

Third Sunday after Epiphany

9:30am & 11am
Answering God's Call
Psalm 65:5-12
Mark 1:14-20

January 28

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

9:30am & 11am
Cry Out!
Psalm 111
Mark 1:21-28

Next Chronicle

Deadline: Fri., Jan. 12
Mailing: Wed., Jan. 24

Email Submissions:

deborah.anderson@akronfcc.org

Editor:

Deborah Anderson

A Letter From the Pastor

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





Sunday Mornings Children and Youth

Nursery Room: Our Nursery (infants and toddlers ages 3 and under) has moved to the second floor Education Wing and is available from 9am until after the 11am service.

9:30am Worship: Children and youth are invited to attend the 9:30am worship in the Learning Center with their parents. Activity packs and an activity carpet are provided and worship is engaging for all ages.

Children's Choir: Children (ages 5 - grade 5) are invited to attend Children's Choir at 10:30am on the second floor.

Church School, 11am Worship: Children (ages PreK-K - grade 8) are invited to begin worship with their families and will leave together for Church School on the second floor with their teachers. Parents and guardians, please sign children out of Church School following worship. (On Communion Sundays, children will return to you during worship.)

Children new to Church School: If it is your child's first time here, your child is welcome to join the other children as they leave worship for Church School.

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!



First Church Community Steelband taught by Matt Dudack

Winter Session - January 22 - February 5, 2018
(Performance Date: February 11 at the 11am Worship)

Each week will have one class offering:

5:30-6:15 pm Combined Beginners and Intermediate

Cost: \$30/participant (\$10/week/person). Scholarships are available: contact Pastor Nanette to explore this option.

To sign up, please pick up a form in the office or download it from our website, www.akronfcc.org, and return it along with your payment to reserve your spot. Registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Class is limited to 7 people, so don't delay!

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.

6:45-8:00pm **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!

Wednesday Night at the Movies 6:45-8:00pm in the Theater Room

January 10

Alive Inside - A chronicle of the astonishing experiences of individuals around the country who have been revitalized through the simple experience of listening to music. This moving documentary reveals the uniquely human connection we find in music and how its healing power can triumph where prescription medication falls short.

January 17 - a trilogy of short films:

Forever Home - A candid look into the lives of an extraordinary family who struggle to provide secure and loving futures for the ten children they adopted from the foster system. Documentary.

Cycle - When newly separated Lia is burgled by incompetent ex-offender Dylan, their confrontation helps her find the courage to move on from her failed marriage.

Five Ways to Say Goodbye - Five adopted siblings confront their emotions and each other as they make funeral arrangements for their mother.

January 24

Forever - Childhood best friends, Nina and Hugo shared adventures growing up. Hugo, now a successful travel photographer, returns home for the first time in 10 years, arriving the day before Nina is to get married. A humiliating turn of events takes them both to beautiful Mauritius. There, day after day, painful memories resurface until long-hidden truths and fears - and love - are revealed.

January 31 - a trilogy of short films:

Washed Away - One man's struggle with crippling chronic pain drives him to create. But his masterpieces are temporary, washed away by the tides within hours of completion. Documentary.

833 - Perpetually late, Jake confides in Mrs. Miller, a wheelchair-using fellow bus-rider, who sees the world through different eyes. If only his boss saw things that way!

Mr. Bernstein - After Debbie hears about her father's life-changing musical experience in a refugee camp, she tracks down the famous conductor years later, and connects him with her father. Based on a true story.

Stewardship & Finance Board

Stewardship/Finance Report (unaudited)

November 2017 - Final

	November	YTD	YTD Budget	Percent to Budget
Income				
2017 Loyalty Campaign	14,130	243,538	252,092	96.61%
Non-pledge Income	2,681	31,621	50,418	62.72%
Special Ministries-includes Special Offering	2,480	45,111	34,156	132.07%
Endowment, Sprowls Trust, Pollock	44,655	504,529	499,011	101.11%
Other Income	3,183	48,405	31,256	154.87%
TOTAL	67,129	873,204	866,933	100.72%
Expenses				
Total Admin. & Support	4,099	66,001	99,379	66.41%
Total Mission	4,981	71,293	72,832	97.89%
Food Service Expense	3,987	39,971	16,271	245.66%
Personnel	24,110	315,350	426,448	73.95%
Property Expenses	27,904	214,239	255,823	83.75%
TOTAL	65,081	706,854	870,753	81.18%

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 Riazzi, 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 234-678-6754 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	Lee Pritchard
George Kostan	Larry Reed
Cecil Larabee	Rev. Bill Rodefer
Linda Marston	Agneta Solomon
Elsie Oldfield	Doug Weyrick
Duane Peterson	

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...

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.

Holiday Closing

The church and office will be closed on
January 15, 2018.

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

Jim Gartner, Paul & Sandy DiMascio, Bill Brandy, and Kathy Berg. Alternate: Kathy Petsko.

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

January 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
	1 Happy New Year  Church Closed	2 9:30am-11:30am Food Cupboard	3 12:00 Noon AA Meeting	4	5	6 4:30pm Love Truck Meal in Fellowship Hall	
7 Communion 9:15am Nursery/PreK-K 9:30am Worship <i>Children remain in worship with their families</i> 10:30am Children's Choir 11:00am Worship 11:00am Church School 12:00pm Special Congregational Meeting	8 12:00 Noon Men's Lunch Bunch AA Meeting	9 9:30am-11:30am Food Cupboard 5:30pm Prayer Blankets	10 10:45am Faith Enrichment 12:00 Noon AA Meeting 5:30pm Handbells 5:30pm Yoga 6:00pm Dinner <i>(reservations please!)</i> 6:45pm Faith Enrichment 6:45pm Movies	11 12:00 Noon AA Meeting 6:30pm Justice & Peace Meeting	12 Chronicle Deadline	13 4:30pm Love Truck Meal in Fellowship Hall	
14 9:15am Nursery/PreK-K 9:30am Worship <i>Children remain in worship with their families</i> 10:30am Children's Choir 11:00am Worship 11:00am Church School	15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Church Closed	16 9:30am-11:30am Food Cupboard 5:30pm Prayer Blankets	17 10:45am Faith Enrichment 12:00 Noon AA Meeting 5:30pm Handbells 5:30pm Yoga 6:00pm Dinner <i>(reservations please!)</i> 6:45pm Faith Enrichment 6:45pm Movies	18 12:00 Noon AA Meeting 12:45-2:00pm Peanut Butter & Jelly Program	19	20 4:30pm Love Truck Meal in Fellowship Hall	
21 9:15am Nursery/PreK-K 9:30am Worship <i>Children remain in worship with their families</i> 10:30am Children's Choir 11:00am Worship 11:00am Church School BP & Diabetes Checks before and after worship	22 12:00 Noon Men's Lunch Bunch AA Meeting 5:30-6:15pm Steel Drums	23 9:30am-11:30am Food Cupboard	24 Chronicle Mailing 10:45am Faith Enrichment 12:00 Noon AA Meeting 5:30pm Handbells 5:30pm Yoga 6:00pm Dinner <i>(reservations please!)</i> 6:45pm Faith Enrichment 6:45pm Movies	25 12:00 Noon AA Meeting	26 12:45-2:00pm Peanut Butter & Jelly Program	27 4:30pm Love Truck Meal in Fellowship Hall	
28 9:15am Nursery/PreK-K 9:30am Worship <i>Children remain in worship with their families</i> 10:30am Children's Choir 11:00am Worship 11:00am Church School	29 12:00 Noon Men's Lunch Bunch AA Meeting 5:30-6:15pm Steel Drums 6:30pm Governing Board Meeting	30 9:30am-11:30am Food Cupboard	31 10:45am Faith Enrichment 12:00 Noon AA Meeting 5:30pm Handbells 5:30pm Yoga 6:00pm Dinner <i>(reservations please!)</i> 6:45pm Faith Enrichment 6:45pm Movies	 Please Note: Any calendar information is subject to change after printing.			

The Chronicle

First Congregational Church
292 East Market Street
Akron, Ohio 44308

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