



# *Light from the Tower*

THE NEWSLETTER OF

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
BUFFALO, NEW YORK

“A COMMUNITY WITH CHRIST AT THE CENTER.”

ESTABLISHED 1812

## *August 2011*

*The mission of historic First Church is to bring diverse people of metropolitan Buffalo together to follow Jesus Christ through worshiping God, fostering spiritual growth and serving the community.*

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### **AN EPISTLE FROM PHIL TO ALL THE SAINTS AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

August comes to First Presbyterian Church bringing lots of activity for a summer month, and even more to look forward to as the fall approaches. Our summer worship schedule has brought us many interesting and delightful experiences of praising God together thinking about the journeys we take as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

Can you believe that this church is 200 years old this year? Looking forward, we begin the celebration of our church's bicentennial with lots of events including sharing in the famous local Garden Walk by opening our building for tours and showing a Power Point presentation to share our story of faithfulness with our friends and neighbors.

Additionally, we are planning for a September 26 concert in our sanctuary that will feature the musicians of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. These wonderful neighbors have offered to share their amazing talents in our church as part of our fund raising effort to restore and maintain the historical integrity of our building. Personally, I am deeply grateful for their generous offer. Dr. David Bond is working with them now to arrange the concert, and a group of people from the church and community is gathering to make the event a joyous celebration.

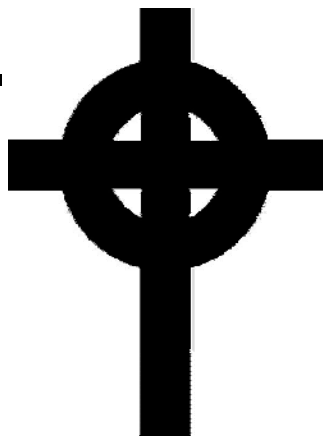
Worship and education programs continue in August with lots of opportunities. We'll share two services with our sisters and brothers of the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church on August 14 and 21. On August 14 we worship at Lafayette Avenue at 10:00 a.m. and on August 21 we will worship here at First Presbyterian, sharing a "Christmas in August" celebration.

Through all this we still look ahead and plan for our future. We have lots of events coming in the fall to celebrate our Bicentennial. Additionally we welcome the Elmwood Village Charter School as they rent part of our building for their wonderful educational work with middle school students. And we are still working on the long term future together as we seek God's will for our ministry together.

My friends enjoy this August. And gleefully look forward to the future. Our ministry here is full of joy-with more to come.

Grace, and Peace,

Phil



## SUMMER WORSHIP

We continue our summer worship schedule as we think about the many journeys our Biblical ancestors took in their faithful obedience to God. We have already covered people like Abraham and Joshua. On July 31 and during August we'll focus on a few others:

**July 31-Jonah!** We'll hear the whole "Whale of a Tale" about this early prophet as we worship together at 10:00 a.m. in the chapel. Most of us have heard the story of Jonah in the belly of the whale, but we may not have heard the rest of the story. On July 31 we will!

**August 7-Pondering the Journey in a Psalm!** The lovely Psalm 121 tells us of the joy of looking to hills and thinking of the love of God in our lives. During worship on August 7 we will share communion and think about how God cares for us along the way.

**August 14-At Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church!** Our shared worship experiences with Lafayette Avenue are always a delight. This time we are trying something different. Each pastor will preach at his own church, so on August 14 we will share worship and listen to Rev. Drew Ludwig share the word with us. Please make sure to steer your car to Lafayette and Elmwood that Sunday to make the service at 10:00 a.m.

**August 21-"Christmas In August!"** With Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church joining us that day we will celebrate Christmas in August. We will sing Christmas hymns (and part of the service will be a hymn sing where you can pick your own favorites) and listen to the story of the journey of Mary and Joseph as the baby Messiah is born. This service will bring us a joyous alternative to the ways we usually celebrate Christmas.

**August 28-"Journey of Sowers!"** This service will focus on one of the journeys of Jesus as he talks to us about the sower of seed in a famous parable. On this particular Sunday we will also be sharing the joy of the Sacrament of Baptism as we think about ways we can share the seeds of faith in our lives.



Join us on **Wednesday, August 31 at 4:00 p.m.**  
to serve meals to the hungry at  
Friends of Night People (corner of Wadsworth and Hudson).  
Sign-up sheet in the Narthex. Sponsored by the CMO Committee.

# GROWING TOGETHER IN THE FAITH

## ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES THIS SUMMER



ADULT CHRISTIAN  
EDUCATION

In lots of churches the children and adult education programs end for the summer. Not here at First Presbyterian. Through the efforts of our Christian Education Committee and especially Virginia McIntyre and the wonderful teachers she has recruited our young people have continued to learn as they focused on the same themes of journeying that we have focused on in worship.

Our adult studies have also been going on all summer. People come and go for a week or so for vacations, but many of our adults have been faithful in one or more of our three adult study opportunities. Here is the lineup for August:

**Sundays** We meet at 11:15 a.m., right after the Worship. Our basic study for August is the wonderful book of Revelation, but we do have two changes for this month, so the schedule for August is:

August 7-"The New York Gay Marriage Law." With the passage of the law allowing gay marriage our church must face the implications of the law in our church life. Our denomination does not allow pastors to perform marriages for same sex couples. The Revs. John Long and Phil Gittings will lead an open discussion of this issue on August 7 after worship. This discussion will be held in the chapel and everyone is invited.

August 14-No class will be held as we will be worshipping at the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church.

August 21-We will continue our Study of the Book of Revelation in the Pastor's Study at 11:15 a.m.

August 28-Revelation class in the Pastor's Study.

**Wednesdays** Our Wednesday Bible Study meets from 1:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. almost every week. Currently this lively group is studying the Letter to the Ephesians. There are refreshments provided. The group meets in the Pastor's Office. *(Please note: The Wednesday Bible Study meets every week in August except for August 3 since Phil Gittings will be out of town.)*

**Thursdays** The Thursday Evening Study Group meets at 7:00 p.m. in the Pastor's Office and studies different books or themes from the Bible. During August we will be studying the book of the prophet Amos, exploring the relevance of his message for our time and place. Once we finish studying Amos in the middle of August the group will pick the topic for the next discussion series.

***We would love to welcome you to any of these study groups!***

# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SURVEY of the CONGREGATION

1. Sunday School teachers are looking for a way to increase instructional time. Would you support:

Children and youth remaining in worship only on the first Sunday of the month (Communion Sunday). The Children's Message would be offered on this Sunday only. Children would go directly to their classrooms on the other three or four Sundays each month.

Leave the program as it is currently designed

Other suggestion(s) to give teachers more time with children

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2. Would you be willing to volunteer in your child(ren)'s classroom two or three times a year?

yes

no

3. Would you be interested in the opportunity to network with other parents to learn more about the Sunday School curriculum, to become more involved in the children's CE program at FPC and to explore ways to share the faith journeys of other families?

yes

no

4. Would you be interested in attending, with your child(ren), a workshop to explain Communion to young people?

yes

no

5. Would you be interested in attending an in-depth Bible study for adults this coming program year. This would be 35-week course that involves class time plus additional preparation time at home. Probable days are Sunday or Thursday from 7-9:30 PM.

yes preferred day \_\_\_\_\_

no

I need more information

I have questions. Please call \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ so I can discuss them.

**Please return this survey to the church office by August 31st. Thank you.**



# Bicentennial Concerts

Our Bicentennial celebrations are officially underway!  
Save the date for these two exciting concerts below.

## Gala Opening Concert

September 26, 2011 @ 8:00 p.m.

Members of the Buffalo Philharmonic will perform a program including a wide variety of music and musical styles. The free-will offering at the door will benefit the building & architecture fund of One Symphony Circle for the preservation of the building.

## Vocalis Chamber Choir

October 23, 2011 @ 7:30 p.m.

For the first time, Buffalo's premier acapella chamber choir brings their exquisitely sculpted sound to the ambient acoustics of First Church. The program will consist of a variety of selections of the acapella repertoire. Free-will donation at the door.

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## Church Life Events

The Church Life Committee has some exciting events planned for the 2011-12 Program Year. Mark your calendars now with the dates below:

Sunday, September 11, 2011

New Life Sunday Welcome Back picnic following worship in the Dining Room

*(Also, as part of the Bicentennial celebration, there will be the opportunity to take a group tour of the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site. More information will be included in the September newsletter.)*

Sunday, December 18, 2011

Christmas Family Dinner after worship. All are welcome!

Sunday, January 8, 2012

Three Kings special coffee hour  
*(Bring a donation to the food pantry!)*

Sunday, February 5, 2012

Bicentennial Birthday Bash with the chocolate fountain!  
*(Bring a children's book for our literacy programs!)*

Sunday, April 1, 2012

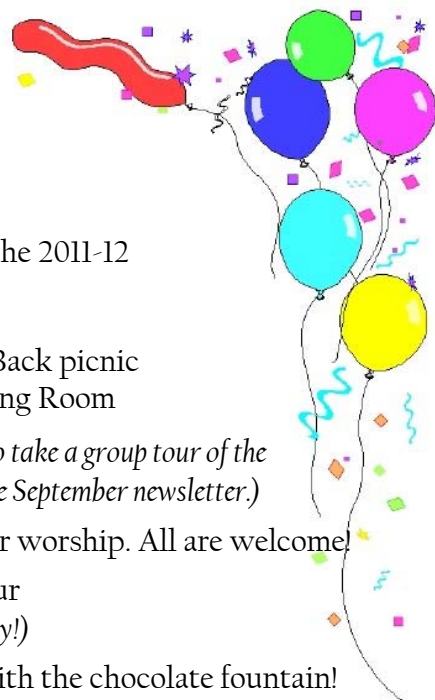
No Fooling! It's the "Let Your Light Shine" talent exhibit.

Sunday, May 13, 2012

Special coffee hour honoring all women.

Sunday, June 17, 2012

Special coffee hour honoring all men.



# Clerk's Corner

By Janet Hill, Clerk of Session

The Session of First Presbyterian Church conducted the following business at its July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.

- Passed a resolution thanking Ellen Henry for leading our Sunday School and other programs, and commending her for her leadership with the Mission Work Camp from Allentown, PA.
- Approved September 26<sup>th</sup> as the date for the Buffalo Philharmonic to do a concert at church, the proceeds of which will benefit First Church.
- Agreed to hold a Session mini-retreat at church on August 10 to discuss possibilities about the future of First Church.
- Approved in principal the fundraising proposal by Jim McKeel to develop an "FP7" Race to take place in October, 2012.
- Added Cecilia Ossah and Michael Smith to the Roll of Active Members, to be received into membership during worship on July 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Agreed to hold a discussion during Adult CE in August about the role of First Church in conducting gay marriages.



## Bookkeeper's Corner

<b>JUNE 2011 FINANCIAL ITEMS</b>	<b>Actual YTD June 30, 2011</b>	<b>Actual YTD June 30, 2010</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	\$272,225	\$301,842
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$343,571	\$267,510
<b>Deficit support from the Endowment</b>	\$44,075	\$69,648
<b>HIGHLIGHTS</b>	<b>Actual YTD June 30, 2011</b>	<b>Actual YTD June 30, 2010</b>
<b>Pledge Income</b>	\$154,809	\$141,736
<b>Plate Income</b>	\$6,592	\$8,321

# News in the Family

Congratulations to Summer Flaherty who became engaged to Tom Przybylak last month! A wedding at First Church is being planned.



Deepest sympathies are expressed to the family and friends of Lois Tubbs who passed away on June 24th. A memorial service was held at First Church last month.



Get well wishes go out to Pat Brown who is recovering from a broken leg, and subsequent surgery. Pat is recovering at the Schofield Residence in Kenmore. Cards may be sent care of  
3333 Elmwood Avenue, Rm. 144  
Kenmore, NY 14217



## August Birthdays

Jen Doerr  
Maria Oakley  
Koty Martin  
Summer Hemphill  
Pierce Kamke  
Kyle Bradford  
Brad Martinez  
Taylor Bradford



## Congratulations to our 2011 Graduates!

- **Chelsea Dupere** – graduated from Springville-Griffith Institute High School.
- **Alex Wasilewski** – grandson of Nancy Barry – graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Science from State University of New York at Buffalo.
- **Nikia Jenkins** graduated from Erie County Community College.
- **Paul Woodard** received his law degree from Duke.
- **Tsi Tsi Paradzai** graduated from Canisius College.

# First Church Calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
31 <b>GARDENWALK</b> 10:00 AM — Worship, Rev. Dr. Gittings preaching 10:15 AM — Sunday school 11:00 AM — Fellowship Time 11:15 AM — Adult Christian Education 4:00 PM — Organ Recital	August 1  BUILDING CLOSED	2  10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg. 5:00 PM — Christian Education Mtg
7 10:00 AM — Worship & Communion, Rev. Dr. Gittings preaching 11:00 AM — Fellowship Time 11:15 AM — Discussion on Gay Marriage	8  BUILDING CLOSED	9  10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg. 6:00 PM — P&A Committee Mtg
14 <b>JOINT WORSHIP AT LAFAYETTE PRESBYTERIAN</b>  10:00 AM — Worship, Rev. Drew Ludwig preaching 11:00 AM — Fellowship Time	15  BUILDING CLOSED	16  10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg.
21 <b>JOINT WORSHIP WITH LAFAYETTE AT FIRST CHURCH</b> <b>CHRISTMAS IN AUGUST SERVICE</b> 10:00 AM — Worship, Rev. Dr. Gittings preaching 10:15 AM — Sunday school 11:00 AM — Fellowship Time 11:15 AM — Adult Christian Education	22  BUILDING CLOSED	23  10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg.
28  10:00 AM — Worship, Rev. Dr. Gittings preaching 10:15 AM — Sunday school 11:00 AM — Fellowship Time 11:15 AM — Adult Christian Education	29  BUILDING CLOSED	30  10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg.

# August 2011

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3	4 7:00 PM — Bible Study	5 7:00 PM — Film Discussion ("Persepolis")	6 BUILDING CLOSED
10 1:00-3:00 PM — Bible Study 4:00 PM — 501c3 Meeting 6:00 PM — Session Retreat	11 5:00 PM — CE Director Search Committee Meeting 7:00 PM — Bible Study	12	13 BUILDING CLOSED
17 1:00-3:00 PM — Bible Study	18 7:00 PM — Bible Study	19	23 BUILDING CLOSED
24 1:00-3:00 PM — Bible Study	25 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 7:00 PM — Bible Study	26	27 BUILDING CLOSED
31 1:00-3:00 PM — Bible Study	September 1 7:00 PM — Bible Study	September 2	September 3 BUILDING CLOSED

# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OFFICERS

## SESSION AND TRUSTEES BY CLASS AND TERM

### *Clerk of Session*

Janet Hill

### *Associate Clerk of Session*

Joan Close

### *Class of 2012*

JoAnn Doerr (2)

Jean Hess (1)

Janet Hill (1)

Don Houck (T) (1)

Quinton Meyer (1)

Roger Woodard (2)

### *Class of 2013*

Ian Bradford (T) (1)

Summer Flaherty (T) (2)

Norm Gibbon (T) (2)

Mike Henry (1)

Henry Porter (T) (2)

William Schulz (2)

### *Class of 2014*

Mark Armesto (T) (1)

Carlton Brownell (T) (2)

John Darby (T) (2)

Lauren Hill (2)

Marv Riegler (2)

Erica Wichtowski (1)

*(T) indicates that the Elder has also been elected to serve as a Trustee while on Session.*

## BOARD OF DEACONS BY CLASS AND TERM

### *Class of 2012*

Gregg Borland (2)

Jessica Laudisio (1)

Madeline Mason (2)

Judith Paradzai (1)

Lovelace Quarshie (2)

Phil Sims (1)

Denis Wettlaufer (1)

### *Class of 2013*

Mark Juan Armesto (1)

Debra Byrne (2)

José Gomez (1)

Susan Koepfel (1)

Alexander Lipnicki (1)

Stephanie Lipnicki (1)

Suzanne Snyder (2)

### *Class of 2014*

Pat Brown (1)

Russell Carlson (2)

Mary Field (2)

\*Karen Frieder (2)

Maria Murphy (2)

Olga Rico-Armesto (1)

Lou Ann Luther Riegler (1)

# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Twitter: @1stChurchBflo

"Like" us on Facebook!

## FIRST CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Dr. Philip S. Gittings, *Interim Pastor*

RevPhil@firstchurchbuffalo.org

Voicemail extension: 13

The Reverend John Long, D.D.

*Parish Associate for Community Outreach*

JohnRLong17@verizon.net

The Reverend Jack Smiley, *Pastor Emeritus*

Dr. David Bond, *Organist/Choirmaster, Bookkeeper*

DBond@firstchurchbuffalo.org

Voicemail extension: 17

Quinton Meyer, *Associate for Pastoral Visitation*

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Christina Trachtenberg, *Business Manager*

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Voicemail extension: 11

Tim Neaverth, *Building Supervisor*

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Liz Kamke, *Outreach Assistant*

EKSK476@gmail.com

Tom Hollfelder, *Custodian/Security Guard*

Church Office, extension 10

For pastoral care concerns,  
call Quinton Meyer,  
Associate for Pastoral Visitation  
909-2259 (Cell)

To reach Rev. Dr. Philip S. Gittings, Interim  
Pastor, call 884-7250, ext. 13 (Office)  
548-0466 (Cell)