



Light from the Tower

THE NEWSLETTER OF

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
BUFFALO, NEW YORK

“A COMMUNITY WITH CHRIST AT THE CENTER.”

ESTABLISHED 1812

January 2012

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.

AN EPISTLE FROM PHIL TO ALL THE SAINTS AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BUFFALO

Writing this before Christmas and knowing that most of you will see it after Christmas makes me wonder how to begin this letter harder to you. Should I include a Merry Christmas wish to my Happy New Year greeting? I think I will. So: “Merry Christmas and Happy New Year” to all the family and friends of First Presbyterian Church of Buffalo, NY.”

2012 is the bicentennial year of our congregation. Two hundred years ago a gaggle of faithful men and women came together to found a church on February 2, 1812. It is great to celebrate the faithfulness of a congregation that has performed significant ministry in such diverse areas as worship and preaching, Christian education, pastoral care, evangelism, social outreach with people from all over the world, and local ministry with people in need. Think of all the lives you and your forebears have touched. Imagine the faces that have smiled when the owner of the face remembered First Presbyterian Church fondly for friendship shared, and faith embodied.

As we celebrate our 200th anniversary we again face the kind of uncertain future that the founders of this congregation faced in their lives. Of course, the circumstances are different in almost every way. But one thing remains the same. We live, as they did, in uncertain times. We face issues that trouble and threaten us. We face uncertainties that can only be faced with faith and trust that God will see us through. We don't know what our future might hold in our personal or our congregational life together.

Looking ahead to the year we will share ministry together, I am praying that the spirit of Christmas will be with us all throughout the New Year and the 200th anniversary celebration. It is a spirit that sent a young couple far from home by decree of a foreign power that made them go long distances for a head count, something that their religion expressly forbade as ungodly but something they were forced to do anyway. It is a spirit that brought shepherds and wise men to a dirty stable to find God's son. It is a spirit that, in good times and bad, always opens us in faith to see that in all times and in all places Emmanuel, God with us, is true.

So during this year we will work and pray together. We will be called upon to make hard choices, find new people with whom we will minister and new ways of sharing God's love. May we all enter this New Year with renewed faith, hope and love as we celebrate the joy of Jesus Christ our Lord.

God Bless Us All,



KERYGMA BEGINS JANUARY 8

Would you believe it? Our year long in depth Bible study, called Kerygma, is beginning on Sunday evening, January 8 at 7:00 p.m. in the Christian Education area on the second floor. **29 people** made the covenant to join this class. We have all ages of adults, new and long time members, and even some who are not members of our church signed up to study God's Word together using this unique and fascinating study.

If you still want to join the class we can accommodate a couple of more people, but you'll have to call the church office to register (716 884-7250). Please make time to pray for this group of Bible students as they embark on their adventure in faith together.



ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

SUNDAY MORNING ADULT EDUCATION

During Advent our Sunday morning class has shared a unique study of the book Christmas is Not Your Birthday which helps us all think about the ways we can be closer to God in the Advent and Christmas season. This study will continue for the first couple of weeks in January in Phil's office at 9:30 a.m. on Sundays. We hope you will join us on January 8 and 15 as we continue studying during the few Sundays after Christmas.

THEN

On about January 22, 2012 we will begin a study of the letter entitled "To the Hebrews." This wonderful New Testament book is one of the most mysterious of the New Testament documents, yet it contains some amazing insights and wisdom. We hope you'll join us for these classes and make 2012 a year for growth and renewal in your faith.

Young Adult Planning Meeting

ALL YOUNG ADULT MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
25ish to 40ish are invited!

Sunday, January 29 after church
Share in fellowship and brainstorming
for the New Year.

Potluck—
please bring a dish or drink to share.



ANNUAL REPORT



Sunday, January 15th

Please email your Annual Report to Christina at ctrachtenberg@firstchurchbuffalo.org



The Membership Committee is looking to institute a shepherding program at First Church! Do you have experience with this? Are you curious to learn more? Are you willing to help? Join us for an initial meeting on **Tuesday, January 17th at 6:30 PM** in the Pastor's Study. Dinner provided!



Interested in helping to plan a Mission Trip??!

We want to plan a mission trip/ work camp for 2012 or 2013, but we need help! The trip would be open to youth and adults, families and single people.

CMO committee is asking for those interested in helping to plan a trip to come to a meeting on Sunday, January 8th in the CE Wing after church.

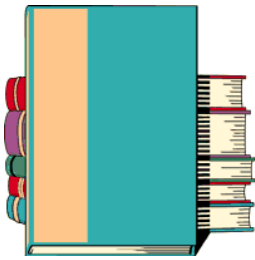
Please contact Erica Wichtowski at erica080880@yahoo.com to RSVP.

Women's Book Club

The Women's Book Club will meet on
Thursday, Jan. 26 at 6:00 PM
at the home of JoAnn Doerr
(32 Tillinghast Place in Buffalo, 832-0708).

We will discuss the book Moby Duck by
Donovan Hohn.

Potluck supper —
please bring a dish to share.



Women's Association News

Wednesday, January 18th at 12:00 PM
in the Chapel

We're trying something new— bring your own sandwich or salad! We will provide beverages and dessert. We will have an inspiring speaker after the luncheon. See you there!

Thank you from Women's Association to Dr. David Bond and Emily Helenbrook for a marvelous musical program at our holiday luncheon in December. It was a wonderful start to the Christmas season!



CANCELATION OF CHURCH EVENTS DUE TO WEATHER

Please note, if a church event is canceled due to weather, a message will be posted on the voicemail recording for extension 10 (Church Office) and in the "News" section of our website at www.firstchurchbuffalo.org. We will also post weather-related cancellations via Twitter & Facebook, and report to the Closing Centrals on all three local news stations when applicable.

Can you help stock our shelves for the Geri Lyon Food Pantry with the following items?

- Cereal
- Pasta
- Pasta sauce
- Canned veggies
- Canned soup
- Canned pork and beans
- Ramen noodles
- Individually wrapped toilet paper



Remember the 4 R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair

As we enter 2012 many of us will take time to reflect on the past twelve months. This could be the year that you and your family resolve to make a real impact on the world. Some will consider resolutions to make changes for the better in the upcoming year.

This month I am writing about a few simple changes that can be made that will help the environment and in most instances will save you money. I hope that you will make a conscious effort to Go Green. Many of you have told me that you already do this. For most of us it is just making small, gradual changes in our lifestyle.

Recycling our old newspapers, bottles, even clothing is helping our planet to survive. Cutting back on fuel consumption, both at home and in the car is a benefit. Turn out the lights and lower your thermostat when you leave the house. Become conscious of ways to conserve energy, power and water.

When you leave home create your own personal "Going Green" kit. Some small items that can add up to a big impact include are:

- ☑ Taking reusable cloth totes to the market and your own reusable, stainless steel coffee thermos/ cup to favorite coffee shops to avoid using non-biodegradable foam cups. Better yet brew the coffee before you leave home and you will save money.
- ☑ There are plenty of ways to employ reusable items at the office. Opt for glasses, china cups, metal utensils, mechanical pencils, and refillable pens. To cut down on the main source of trash you're likely to produce during the day, save money, and improve your health all at once, bring your lunch rather than buying. At the very least, bring a set of your own silverware and a bottle of your favorite condiment to the office so you can skip the plastic utensils and the little packets of salt, pepper, ketchup and soy sauce.
- ☑ Use less paper by using both sides of the paper and don't forget to "Print Preview" before printing so you can avoid printing unnecessary stuff. Get off mailing lists by contacting catalog companies or anyplace for that matter. It really works
- ☑ Keep warm: It's one of the oldest, simplest, most effective technologies for staying cozy while saving heating fuel—layer up with extra sweaters and long underwear, and turn down the thermostat.
- ☑ It's a new year make a clean sweep – clear out closets and drawers, discarding worthless possessions that haven't been used recently. Donate unwanted items. Most closets, drawers, and cabinets are full of clothing, shoes, accessories, kitchen utensils, toys, and games that we do not need. It is amazing how much we can accumulate, thinking that we will find a use for that gadget or article of clothing that has been gathering dust for several years. The Salvation Army, Goodwill Industries or the St. Vincent de Paul Society will find a grateful recipient of your cast-offs and you will have a more streamlined place to live.
- ☑ Here is one suggestion that I just read about - Use revolving doors instead of swinging doors— it saves on heating and air conditioning expenses. Who knew? The next time I enter City Hall I will know which door to use.

One person CAN make a difference— start with simple green footsteps today then take these steps in the next week, next month and during the year ahead, living green.

Wishing everyone a Happy New Year!


Don't forget, "together we can make a difference!"

Lesley Haynes: peacesojourner@yahoo.com

First Church Calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
January 1, 2012 NEW YEAR'S DAY 11:00 AM — Worship & Communion, Quinton Meyer 12:00 PM — Fellowship Time	2 BUILDING CLOSED	3 4:30 PM — Literacy tutoring 7:00 PM — Lands & Bldgs. Mtg.
8 9:30 AM — Adult Christian Education 11:00 AM — Worship, Rev. Dr. Gittings 11:15 AM — Sunday School 12:00 PM — Fellowship Time 12:15 PM — Bicentennial Committee Meeting 12:15 PM — Mission Trip Planning Meeting	9 BUILDING CLOSED	10 10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg. 4:30 PM — Literacy tutoring 5:30 PM — Worship & Music Mtg. 6:30 PM — CE Mtg.
15 ANNUAL REPORT DEADLINE 9:30 AM — Adult Christian Education 11:00 AM — Worship, Rev. Dr. Gittings 12:00 PM — Fellowship Time	16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Staff Holiday) BUILDING CLOSED	17 10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg. 4:30 PM — Literacy tutoring 5:15 PM — Membership Mtg. 6:30 PM — Shepherding Mtg.
22 9:30 AM — Adult Christian Education 11:00 AM — Worship, Rev. Dr. Gittings 11:15 AM — Sunday School 12:00 PM — Fellowship Time 12:15 PM — CMO Committee Meeting	23 BUILDING CLOSED	24 10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg. 4:30 PM — Literacy tutoring
29 9:30 AM — Adult Christian Education 11:00 AM — Worship, Rev. Dr. Gittings 11:15 AM — Sunday School 12:00 PM — Fellowship Time 12:15 PM — Young Adult Gathering	30 BUILDING CLOSED	31 10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg. 4:30 PM — Literacy tutoring

January 2012

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
4 2:00 PM — Church Life Mtg. 4:30 PM — Literacy tutoring	5	6	7 BUILDING CLOSED
11 1:00-3:00 PM — Bible Study 4:30 PM — Literacy tutoring	12 7:00 PM — Bible Study	13	14 BUILDING CLOSED
18 12:00 PM — Women's Association Luncheon & Program 1:00-3:00 PM — Bible Study 4:30 PM — Literacy tutoring 7:00 PM — Session Mtg.	19 7:00 PM — Bible Study	20	21 BUILDING CLOSED
25 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 4:30 PM — Literacy tutoring	26 6:00 PM — Women's Book Club Gathering	27	28 BUILDING CLOSED
February 1 4:30 PM — Literacy tutoring	February 2 Happy 200th Birthday, First Church! 	February 3	February 4 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)

Norm Gibbon (T) (2)

Mike Henry (1)

Henry Porter (T) (2)

Summer Przybylak (T) (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 Koeppel (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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www.firstchurchbuffalo.org email@firstchurchbuffalo.org
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*

Meyer405@aol.com

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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)