



Newsletter

AUGUST 2022

FIRST CHRISTIAN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

PASTOR'S PONDERING

Friends,

What a ride we have been on! Now, we can get busy discerning our future and we **must** get busy with this arduous task. As we all realize, the building maintenance is too much for a congregation our size, we **must** prepare our hearts and souls for our next steps on how we will move forward.

I have said the church is the people not the property. However, this is a bit of a half-truth. If we are not careful half-truths masquerade as whole truths and then end up in no truth. The church IS the people, but the place does matter. We must pray and consider where we believe we are called to be church. In the 1800s and 1900s FCUCC was called to be church in "downtown Burlington".

We must also be careful of short-term thinking. Where will we go is a vital question for NOW not for when the building sells. I know we were looking for the most affordable solution. A space for 30-40. Wise stewardship is good, and sometimes the less expensive option is the better one. But not always. Especially not when we're thinking about **the flourishing of the church** and the city two or three generations from now. As we decide where in Burlington, we see FCUCC let's start to dream dreams and have visions. Imagine growth and what it looks like to you.

I would also caution us to avoid "early-church nostalgia." That means avoid going back to what FCUC was like 40 years ago but also avoid going back to what the church was like in ACTS when they went from house to house or even the mega church in Jerusalem. That's all "early-church nostalgia". God is calling FCUCC to where and what God is calling us. It's something new, that's all I know right now. Therefore, defining a clear vision will be the goal over the next month. You all will be a part of that. In fact, I hope I will find someone to draw two trees. One will include who we are and what we produce and the other will include who we want to be and what we want to produce. Please keep in mind what you think the world around us needs. How can we answer the need? Every ministry and every church starts/started with a need. Needs change. What need can we meet?

As you come in on Sunday mornings, I am asking you to write some word or words of what we produced on leaves or fruit sticky notes provided there. Soon we will see the other tree filled with what you hope we will produce as a church in the future and **more sticky fruit, or leaves are there for you to write on**. This will be a fun way of **looking back and looking forward** at FCUCC's tree of life. What have we grown in the past? **Are we ready to let some of those leaves fall to the ground and die? Is that fruit you put up there still in season with the church today?** We know a tree by its fruit. As you ponder those things, ask yourself, "What do we vision/hope to produce in the future?" Put those on the other tree.

Our vision should be bigger than our current situation. That's what makes it a vision. It's looking beyond **what is** to what **could be**, what should be, and in each of your opinions what it needs to be. You see something no one else does, at least not like you do. Vision is painting a picture of what the future looks like in a tangible and concrete way. So, the trees in Bray Hall will be your input for you as well as the visioning committee to pray over. The group will talk about and bring back to you in plan form the same for more discussion and revision after comparing it to demographics of the area etc. We are in this together. Every one of you have a voice and it needs to be heard. Then, we all must come together to meet the needs determined and begin to plant something new. In the meantime, let's all be in prayer together about our future; remembering 1 Cor. 3:6-7, I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

Pastor Joy

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Those remaining in our Prayers...

*Elsie Bolick
Troy Johnson
Amber Massey
Rachel
Buster Freeman
Mark Garrison
Bobbye Mebane*

*Randy Sellars
Lewis & Vonnie Fowler
Marci Nanny
Joe Strickland
Frances Morgan
Ken & Lola Pipes
Penelope Strange*

Change of Address

Change of address? Please let us know by contacting the church office via email, office@firstchristianucc.org or phone, 336-226-7428.

Birthdays

Cathy Andes 8/2
Sue Horne 8/4
Lola Pipes 8/4
Matt Terrell 8/7
Carolyn Pettigrew 8/13
Evan Russell 8/21
Robert Price 8/28
Ken Pipes 8/31

Anniversaries

Harvey & Merle Sharpe 8/15
Cindy Sharpe & Brooke Manning 8/18
Nevin & Jill Caldwell 8/22
Mack & Elizabeth Painter 8/23

TENTATIVE SUMMERTIME STORIES

LITURGISTS & THEMES

Date	Liturgist	Scripture	Theme	Extra Info
8/7/22	Kathy Russel	2 Cor. 5:17	New Creature in Christ	Summertime story by Troy Johnson
8/14/22	Julie Miller	Phillipians 3:12-14	Pressing On	Summertime story by Ken Little
8/21/22	Brooke Manning	2 Cor. 12:9	Confidence in Christ	Summertime story by Brooke Manning
8/28/22	Sandra Greene	Psalm 23	God with us	Summertime story by Gary and Sherry Massey

EVENTS

Women's Circle Meetings

Margaret Lightborne Circle and Centennial Circle meetings start back the first Sunday in August for a joint salad bar

To follow regular schedule after the first Sunday in August

Adult Faith Formation Class

John Graves Adult Sunday School meets weekly on Sundays at 9:30 am in the John Graves Classroom. All are welcome to join in.

Visioning Meeting

Thursday August 4th at 6pm with a Pizza Meal

Next meeting will be Wednesday August 17th at 6pm

CHURCH INFORMATION

First Christian UCC Mission Statement

We affirm our faith in Jesus Christ and in the Church that he has calling into being which, by his grace and mercy, welcomes all. We encourage all who join us and confess Jesus Christ - regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, social, economic, physical or mental condition - to share fully in all aspects of our church life and leadership. We believe relationships between individuals, groups, and nations must be based on love, justice, commitment, and mutual respect; and we strive toward such relationships in our church, homes, and community.

~Approved by FCUCC congregation 2011

OUR MINISTRY SUPPORT TEAM

Office Hours: Monday – Thursday, 9 am - 12 pm

Office is closed on Fridays

CHURCH OFFICERS

President: Mr. Troy Johnson

Vice President: Mr. Jamie Fonville

Treasurer: Mr. Ken Little

Church Secretary: Ms. Nancey Simmons

Acting Church Secretary: Peggy Johnson

FIRST CHRISTIAN UCC STAFF

Interim Pastor: Rev. Joy Allridge

Minister of Music: Mr. Matt Rice

Office Administrator: Debbie Norris