February 26, 2012
Dedication Celebration

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of God!”
Psalm 122:1

First Congregational United Church of Christ
945 G Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

No matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey
you are welcome here.
ORDER OF DEDICATION AND CELEBRATION

INTROIT
The Call of the Drum       John Marsh
The Bidding Song    Surely God
(Please join in the song at invitation of the soloist.)
Words by Andrew Dreitcer, music by Stephen Iverson; ©1998 Iversong, used by permission.

*CALL TO WORSHIP               Bonnie Hardy
Leader: Good people of faith, gather together upon this holy ground. Open your hearts, your minds, your ears to what God has done. Listen for God’s call to us this afternoon as we anticipate the future.
All: Surely God is in this place, holy ground.
Leader: Upon this ground, shortly after 1865, our Congregational abolitionist ancestors built a church committed to emancipation and racial justice;
Upon this ground, our congregation helped found Howard University – to provide education for those who had been enslaved;
Upon this ground, our forebears stayed and rebuilt when earlier buildings became inadequate – refusing to leave downtown.
All: Surely God is in this place, holy ground.
Leader: Upon this ground, we supported civil rights activists and those working for social justice;
Upon this ground, four decades ago, we opened doors to provide hospitality and advocacy for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons;
Upon this ground, we sought to meet the needs of homeless women and men in our city;
Upon this ground, various religious communities have shared space and worked together to nurture faithful living.
All: Surely God is in this place, holy ground.
Leader: Upon this ground, we spoke out against war and promoted peace with justice;
Upon this ground, children and youth have grown in faith, prayer, and love. We too work for God’s peace;
Upon this ground, we covenanted together embracing a vision of unity embodied in the United Church of Christ: to live out God’s extravagant welcome. Our story continues, now, upon this very ground.
As we join with partners and friends of God’s justice and love, we remain a church confident that God is still speaking. We are listening.
All: Upon this holy ground, on this great day,
O God, speak to us. Call us to worship!
*HYMN  

**O God, Our Help in Ages Past**

Words by Isaac Watts, alt.; music by William Croft

**WORDS OF WELCOME**

Sidney D. Fowler and Nan McConnell

*PASSING OF THE PEACE*

Please turn to those around you, introduce yourself, and greet one another with words such as “The peace of God be with you.”

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Meg Maguire

**ANTHEM**

What Is This Place?

Text by Huub Oosterhuis, tr. David Smith; tune: Komt Nu Met Zang, arr. Thomas Keesecker

Sean Neidlinger, cello

What is this place where we are meeting? Only a house, the earth its floor. Walls and a roof sheltering people, windows for light, an open door. Yet it becomes a body that lives when we are gathered here, and know our God is near.

Words from afar, stars that are falling, sparks that are sown in us like seed: names for our God, dreams, signs and wonders sent from the past are all we need. We in this place remember and speak again what we have heard: God’s free redeeming word.

And we accept bread at this table, broken and shared, a living sign. Here in this world, dying and living, we are each other’s bread and wine. This is the place where we can receive what we need to increase: our justice and God’s peace.

**SCRIPTURES**

Psalm 122
Revelation 21:1-5a/Apocalipsis 21:1-5a

John Deckenback and Kwame Osei Reed

Mari Castellanos and Diana D. Gomez de Molina
God of Change and Glory

Words and music by Al Carmines ©1974 Al Carmines, used by permission.
WORDS FOR THIS TIME
From our architects, a minister colleague in the city, and the president of the UCC

Words of Vision
Billie Tsien and Tod Williams

Words of Charge
Susan Newman

Words of Prayer
Geoffrey Black

MUSICAL MEDITATION
(A time for personal and prayerful reflection.)

OFFERING
Michael Zawada
Today’s offering is dedicated to Thrive DC. Formerly the Dinner Program for Homeless Women, Thrive DC was started, housed and supported by First Church from its beginning in 1979. Today Thrive DC is an independent nonprofit organization located at 1525 Newton Street NW that offers basic human needs (food, showers, transportation) while providing case management to help clients achieve their goals.

Received by: Jessica Macleod, Director of Social Services of Thrive DC

*DOXOLOGY
I Thank You Jesus

Words and music by Kenneth Morris, ©1948 Martin and Morris. Copyright renewed. All rights administered by UniChappell Music, Inc. through OneLicense.net, #A-720443. All rights reserved.
Susie Hayward: For the worship of God through breaking bread and breaking open the Word, For the worship of God through gathering the beloved community, and pouring the baptismal waters,  
All: We dedicate this building.

(Barbara Hayes, longtime member of the church who has worshipped in all three church buildings, pours water into the baptismal bowl with a pitcher that was used in the original church building for fellowship gatherings.)

Kim Darling: For nurturing children and parents, For their inspiration and protection, For encouraging young people to wrestle with truth, and calling them to a life of justice and mercy,  
All: We dedicate this building.

Dwan Reece: For the reverent silence into which your still-speaking voice emerges, And for our voices woven together in a tapestry of prayer and song, For the drum’s boom, the organ’s drama, and the piano’s cascade of notes,  
All: We dedicate this building.

Tom Knoll: For joining hands with others to break down barriers of religion, race, class, and politics, For building up the beloved community: one family, no insiders or outsiders, each person’s gifts recognized, affirmed, and nurtured,  
All: We dedicate this building.

Peg Lorenz: For comfort to those who mourn, and refuge to those fleeing violence, For guidance to those who are lost, and sustenance to those who thirst, For all people who seek a soft place to land, a place of welcome, a home,  
All: We dedicate this building.

Peter Byrne: For working with partners to dismantle systems that foster racism and heterosexism, For transforming desires that breed materialism, economic injustice, environmental degradation, and violence, For building a city and world in which all God’s people will live in dignity,  
All: We dedicate this building.

Marian Drake: For the continued unfolding of your vision, For the continued heartbeat of your mystery,
For our continued turning toward you,

All: We dedicate this building.

Please stand as you are able and place your hand on the shoulder of the person in front of you (or take their hand) — making a human chain connecting the whole congregation to the communion table.

Barbara Brown Zikmund & Barbara Gerlach: Joined here together in hand and spirit, our feet firm upon stone carved from the earth, we seek your blessing for this space, and for this communion table, the center of our life here.

Gracious and Eternal Spirit, empower us to remember that we stand on holy ground with those who have made this church strong. May your presence be ever available to us in this place. Keep us in covenant, walking together in ways revealed to us in sacrament and word, study and prayer, fellowship and mission.

Give us courage in the struggle for justice and peace, inspiring us to seek the welfare of this city and reach out to heal our broken world.

God, today we dedicate this building to you in the name of all that has come before and all that is yet to unfold.

All: Amen!

*HYMN  

God Who Called Us through the Prophets  
(see page 8)

*BENEDICTION  

Sidney D. Fowler

OPENING OF THE DOORS

POSTLUDE  

Improvisation on “God Be With You”  
(Hymn written by Jeremiah Rankin, 1880, former Pastor of First Congregational Church and former President of Howard University.)

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

At the conclusion of the Dedication Celebration, you are invited to a reception on the second floor. Please join us for coffee or punch, a nibble or two and take this opportunity to explore our beautiful new space.

Assisted listening devices are available.

Please ask an usher if you would care for one.

CD recordings of today’s service are available following worship.

Don’t forget to validate your parking ticket! The validator is on the desk in the Narthex.
God Who Called Us through the Prophets

Words by Mary Keithahn, music by John Horman.
Commissioned by First Congregational United Church of Christ to celebrate the dedication of this new building.
Words of Vision: Tod Williams and Billie Tsien have worked together for over thirty years. In 1986, they founded Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects in New York City, a studio of 30 people working primarily for institutions that value aspiration and meaning, timelessness and beauty. The firm is known for its careful attention to context, detail and the subtleties of materials. National and international award winning projects include the Neurosciences Institute, the American Folk Art Museum, the Phoenix Art Museum, and the David Rubenstein Atrium at Lincoln Center. Current work includes The Barnes Museum in Philadelphia, a performing/visual arts center at the University of Chicago, and the Asia Society headquarters in Hong Kong.

Words of Charge: The Reverend Doctor Susan Newman is the Associate Minister for Congregational Life and Social Justice at All Souls Church, Unitarian, in Washington, DC. She has had a 36-year career as pastor, community advocate, teacher, chaplain, and author. Licensed in the Baptist Church in 1976, Dr. Newman was ordained at Peoples Congregational UCC in 1983, where she served as Assistant Minister. A native of Washington, her ministry has focused upon the challenges facing urban America. When she was the senior pastor of First Congregational Church, UCC, in Atlanta, GA, she chaired the mayor’s commission on Community Relations and a Blue Ribbon Panel on Welfare Reform. Here in Washington she served as the Director of Public Policy at the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice and was Senior Advisor for Religious Affairs to the Mayor of DC. She is the author of several books. She holds a Bachelors degree in journalism from George Washington University, a Master of Divinity from Howard University School of Divinity, and a Doctor of Ministry from the United Theological Seminary.

Words of Prayer: The Reverend Geoffrey A. Black is General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ. Before his election to the Collegium of UCC leaders in June 2009, he was Conference Minister of the UCC’s New York Conference (2000 to 2009). From 1994 to 2000 he was on the national staff of the Office for Church Life and Leadership (currently Parish Life and Leadership), a national agency of the United Church of Christ. Before joining the national staff of the denomination he served as Pastor of the Congregational UCC of South Hempstead, NY, assistant chaplain at Brown University, associate minister at St. Albans Congregational UCC in Queens, Lecturer in the Field Education Department at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, and as Protestant chaplain at Adelphi University. Ecumenical commitment, concern for equal justice, African-American empowerment, and community improvement have always shaped Black’s ministry in the church. This has resulted in work with organizations such as the Nassau Coalition for Safety and Justice, The Long Island Interracial Alliance for a Common Future, and the Amistad Cultural Center of Long Island, which he co-founded. Since moving to the national UCC offices in Ohio, he has been an active member of Caring Communities of Shaker Heights, Ohio, and Partnership 2000 of the Shaker Public schools.

Additional Participants in today's Dedication Celebration
Rev. Dr. Mari Castellanos, Member, Worship Commission, First Congregational UCC
Rev. Doug Clark, former Interim Minister, First Congregational UCC
Rev. Dr. John R. Deckenback, Conference Minister, Central Atlantic Conference UCC
Mr. Gary Fitzgerald, Director of Music, First Congregational UCC
Rev. Dr. Sidney D. Fowler, Transitional Minister, First Congregational UCC
Rev. Barbara Gerlach, former Minister, First Congregational UCC
Rev. Diana Molina Gomez, Member, Worship Commission, First Congregational UCC,
Rev. Dr. Barbra Hardy, Associate Minister for Christian Education, First Congregational UCC
Ms. Jessica Macleod, Director of Social Services, Thrive DC
Rev. Tom Knoll, Pastor of First Trinity Lutheran Church, Washington, DC
Ms. Meg Maguire, Chair, Site Development Task Force, First Congregational UCC
Ms. Emily Marsh, Soloist
Ms. Nancy McConnell, Moderator, First Congregational UCC
Rev. Dr. Kwame Osei Reed, Associate Conference Minister, Central Atlantic Conference UCC
Rev. LaFayette Seymour, CommUnity Church on the Hill, Washington, DC
Mr. Michael Zawada, former chair of Social Outreach and Awareness Commission, FCUCC
Many other speakers in the Call to Worship and the Litany of Dedication are active participants in the life of First Congregational UCC.
The Building Story

First Congregational UCC was founded in 1865 by Congregationalists rooted in New England traditions. Led by Christian abolitionists, in 1867 it became the first racially integrated congregation in Washington, DC. In that same year, its Mission Committee played a prominent role in the founding of Howard University.

Earlier Church Buildings

All three church buildings have been built on our property at 10th and Streets, NW. The original church building, dedicated in 1868, was condemned in 1953. The trustees recommended that the building be sold and that the church relocate to the rapidly developing Washington suburbs. The congregation rejected this idea and voted to rebuild in the present location, continuing its downtown ministry in the nation’s capital and affirming the church’s presence in the city.

In 1961, the congregation occupied what we call the “middle church,” including the Howard carillon tower at the corner of 10th and G Streets, NW. During its 46 years, in addition to First Congregational, the building served as home to other congregations, the church-sponsored Dinner Program for Homeless Women (now Thrive DC), and social service and meal programs.

The Move to Today

In 2004, with a deteriorating building and a resurgent downtown, the congregation made the decision to redevelop the property by selling the air rights to a private developer in exchange for a new, accessible, green building designed to carry out our mission. The First Church Site Development Task Force organized and coordinated the extensive legal, design, and financial tasks necessary to develop the project; and fostered an extraordinary partnership between the church and the developers, designers, and construction firms whose skill, labor, and commitment have made this project a reality.

For the past five years the congregation worshipped at First Trinity Lutheran Church, at 4th and E Streets, NW, Washington, DC.

The Organ

On May 16, 1961, Casavant #2618, three manuals, pedal, and more than 3,500 pipes comprising forty-three ranks, was presented by First Congregational Church in a dedication recital performed by Dr. David Craighead, head of the Organ Department at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York and a world-renowned performer at the peak of his powers. An excellent instrument from its first days in the shop of one of the world’s premiere organ builders, it served First Church with distinction until the decisions were made which resulted in today’s Dedication Service. The instrument has been redesigned, rebuilt with a brand new console (the part the player sits at) and somewhat enlarged to accommodate its new home by Orgues Letourneau of St. Hyacinthe, Quebec. Mr. Letourneau was a member of the Casavant firm before founding his own, and in fact the father of one of his current employees was an important part of the team that constructed #2618, so this instrument is special to the whole Letourneau company.
Significant work was done on the organ in 2003 to repair damage from a leaky roof. Letourneau employees Michell Gendrom and Stefan Langelier worked on the organ then and again in the last few weeks installing what you see before you. Michell believes his father worked on the organ when it was originally built by Casavant. And Stefan met his future wife here in Washington back in 2003.

The instrument was originally scheduled to be delivered in late October 2011; last fall it seemed reasonable to expect that it would be part of today’s service. Obviously that was not to be, only because of the sorts of delays typical in the construction of such an important space inside an important new building. We are guardedly optimistic about having the organ for Easter 2012, but whenever it is finally completed and ready for prime time, you will all be invited back to share our joy in this very special blessing.

SPECIAL ART EXHIBIT PREVIEW: Windows and Mirrors: Reflections on the War in Afghanistan

The war in Afghanistan is now the longest in U.S. history, yet for many people it has been rendered largely invisible. In 2009, the American Friends Service Committee put out a nationwide call to artists seeking contributions for a traveling memorial to Afghan civilians who have died in the war. More than 40 muralists donated their talents, designing and painting individual murals on sheets of acrylic cloth. At over 900 square feet, the mural is not a single painting, but an oversized statement on the human cost of war. It is not the voice of one person, but that of an engaged artistic community.

Today is a preview opportunity to see the exhibit in connection with our Dedication Celebration. The exhibit opens formally on March 1 (5:00 – 8:00 pm) with a special reception at 7:00 pm that will include conversations with some of the artists. Throughout the month of March it will be open on Thursday evenings from 5:00 to 8:00 pm (March 1, 8, 15 and 22). It will also be open on Sunday, March 4 from 3:00 – 7:00 pm. Not all of the murals are here. Another group of murals can be seen at the Methodist Building, 100 Maryland Avenue NE, which is open to the public from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, March 1-22.
WORDS OF THANKS

With gratitude for their creative gifts and commitment
2004-2012

Ministers, Music Directors and Office Managers

Rev. John Mack
Rev. Barbara Gerlach
Rev. Dr. Ron Hopson
Rev. Monte Hillis
Rev. Doug Clark
Rev. Dr. Barbra Hardy
Rev. Peter Dennebaum

Rev. Dr. Sidney D. Fowler
Ms. Kay Rogers
Patrick Summers
Loretta Uzzelle
Dennis Turner
Stefan Brodd

John Touchton
Dudley Oakes
Gary Fitzgerald
Barno Murillo
Byron Adams

Moderators

Peter Tracey
Dale Ostrander
Ellen Bushmiller
Randy Herrick Stare
Nan McConnell

First Congregational UCC Site Development Task Force
Meg Maguire, Chair

Design Team, Legal Team, Negotiating Team, Worship Furnishings Study Group, and Worship Furnishings Fund

Byron Adams • Joe Alfred • Faith Brightbill • Ann Bushmiller • Karen Byrne • Peter Byrne • Bob Crossley
Lucille Dickinson • Phyllis Evans • Anne Griffis • Richard Griffis • Barbara Hayes • Susie Hayward
Randy Herrick-Stare • Randy Jones • Peg Lorenz • Cindy Mazur • Nick McConnell • Nora Marsh
John Smeltzer • Fredda Sparks • Peter Tracey • Barbara Brown Zikmund • Joe Zikmund

Additional Members
Ellen Bushmiiller • Linda Carder • Mari Castellanos • Jeffrey Catts • Doug Clark • Virginia Gaddis • Barbara Gerlach
• John Mack • Anne Nelsen • Hart Nelsen • Ruth Shinn • Alisa Tanaka-Dodge • Priscilla Waters

Owners/Developers
First Congregational United Church of Christ
Skanska USA Commercial Development Inc.
P.N. Hoffman & Associates, Inc.
E.R. Bacon Development

Church Architects
Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects
Aurelie Paradiso, Project Architect

Building Architects
Cunningham | Quill Architects
Ralph Cunningham, Chris Morrison, Michael Day

Engineers
Elhert/Bryan, Inc., Structural Engineers
Girard Engineering, MEP Engineers
Ron Eligator and Ken Andria, Acousticians
Delon Hampton & Associates, Civil Engineers

Contractor
Skanska USA Building Inc.

Specialists
Debra Yogodzinsky, Reed Smith, Counsel
Paul Deeb, Lighting Design
Amy Weinstein, FAIA, Architectural Consultant
Neil Sinclair, Cost Consultant
Desa Ruffin, Development Consultant
Orgues Letourneau, Organ

And many others whose faith and labor have made this building possible.