

First Congregational United Church of Christ in DC

GABRIEL'S HORN

April 2011

A Just Peace, Open and Affirming, Multiracial and Multicultural Congregation Intentionally Inclusive...Expect the Unexpected

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Dear First Church Family –

I write this article with a deep sense of gratitude. As we dialogue about our future in the next few weeks, our church is vibrant. We have much to be thankful for: our worship services are meaningful; our music program is strong; our children are being nurtured; and church members and friends are engaged with ministry. We are part of a vibrant community of faith.

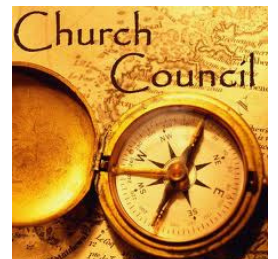
Several weeks ago I had the opportunity to tour our new church. I am newly excited by our building and the opportunities it offers for our congregation and for the larger community. If you have not been to the site recently, please look for information on upcoming tours. You will be reassured that we are in fact returning home, and it is an extraordinary new space.

*Blessings,
Nan*



COUNCIL CAPSULE

March 8, 2011 meeting: First Church now has two groups to help up through this interim period. The Transition Connectors (**Randy Herrick-Stare, Ellen Bushmiller, and Dale Ostrander**) are the people designated to receive our comments and questions and either answer them or pass them on. The Transitional/Sustaining Pastor Search Committee (also referred to as the Transition Group) is composed of **Kim Darling**, chair, **Dwight Davis, Marian Drake, and John Marsh**. They will identify our needs and what qualities we should look for in a contract pastor, and perform a search. They are in charge of the cluster meetings on April 8-10. In addition to these two groups, **Kim Darling** was identified as a person to contact if you have questions pertaining to the separation between First Church and Peter. Kim can speak in general terms about the evaluation. Questions may also be discussed at the Cluster Meetings.



Meg Maguire reported that construction is a month behind schedule. Skanska has a contract with one group which will occupy two floors, and other groups are interested.

John Deckenback and **Kim Darling** performed **Peter Dennebaum's** exit interview with him. The Personnel Committee will conduct **Bonnie Hardy's** evaluation. Facilities is considering a leasing agent to rent our space. Finance is monitoring the budget and working on OGHS. The Worship Commission is planning to ask commissions to take responsibility for worship for a "season", with the youth assuming leadership for one team. Care of Parish is focusing on people who need visits and the two memorial service receptions. Membership is working on providing leadership for our web site and making it attractive and informative as we occupy our new space. They are also exploring the relationship between the church directory, which Barno uses for the membership count, and the church register. **Grace Bassler** will help with this. We need a leader/coordinator for Gay Pride weekend; **Tobey Slagenweit-Coffman** has done this previously, but is he moving away. (He also was updating the web site.) Christian Ed is considering the confirmation process, but there aren't many kids of the appropriate age. Social Action is working on Second Sunday offerings and nurtures. The need for an updated church history book was discussed, and several names were mentioned.

by Barbara Hayes

NEWS FROM AROUND THE PARISH

by Joan King



Barbara Hayes is going to her college, Colby, in Maine for the April 1-2 weekend. The occasion is the 60th reunion of a women's singing group, the Colbyettes, which she was in *almost* 60 years ago. After the reunion she'll visit good friends nearby for several days. **Ben** and **Peter Smolinsky Withbroe** are going to Minnesota over spring break to visit their grandparents just before Easter.

BBZ and **Joe Zikmund** will leave for a month in Asia on April 11, returning May 10. They will visit parts of Southeast Asia and China on a cruise that features one of Joe's favorite jazz groups, spend Easter in Hong Kong, and end up visiting friends in Kyoto, Japan. Their friends in western Japan are OK but traumatized by what has happened and eager to have visitors, inasmuch as they feel very isolated from the world. The Zikmunds spent four years teaching in Japan from 2001-2005 and try to make return visits every two years.

Oley and **Sally Olson** are back from their South American cruise which began rather fatefully when, on the first morning on the ship, Oley caught his thumb in a heavy swinging door in the state room and severed his left thumb just below the fingernail. He had to have surgery in a Brazilian hospital. He was able to continue the cruise with some enjoyment but is still in pain.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

Nancy Withbroe reports that she is thrilled to let everyone know that **Paul Smolinsky** was named director at Jackson & Campbell in February. **Kim Bassler** was inducted into Sigma Tau Delta, an International English Honor Society, March 25, at Virginia Tech. **Don** and **Grace** attended the ceremony and celebrated with her.



Ron Hopson will be installed to his ministry in the UCC on April 6 at Howard University, and all FCC members are encouraged to attend. Further details: The Reverend Doctor Ronald E. Hopson, who has been on the faculty at Howard for a number of years, has recently been approved by the Potomac Association for the privilege of call in the UCC. Professor Hopson, who is Associate Professor of Psychology and Divinity at Howard University and Interim Associate Dean of Howard University School of Divinity, has been a member

of First Congregational UCC in DC and is now a member of Covenant Baptist UCC in DC. He has gone through the necessary preparation to be granted "authorized ministerial standing in the UCC" and, to that end, on April 6 he will be formally installed to his ministry of teaching at Howard in a four way covenant between himself, Howard University School of Divinity, Covenant Baptist UCC and the Potomac Association. The celebration will begin with an Installation Council at 4:00 pm in the Pratt Room at HUSD (1400 Sheperd St NE Washington, DC 20017) where everyone can get to know Professor Hopson. That will be followed at 5:30 pm with a festive service of installation in the Thurman Chapel--where Professor Hopson will preach. **BBZ** can provide more information and answer any questions you may have about this ceremony. You will also be interested to know that Ron has accepted our invitation to preach at First Church on May 22.

IN OUR PRAYERS:



Pat Ashbrook took a fall recently and is now recovering at home. Fortunately, nothing was broken, but she did suffer some cuts and bruises. This comes after a long recovery from joint replacement and adds to the time before which she will be able to rejoin us at church. Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers.

We also remember and pray for recovery for **Claricia Cummings, Jannie Champ, Jim Green, Alexis Joy Hayes, Brooks Pumphrey, Regina Saxton, and Kathi Wolf** as they deal with their medical issues.

Fletcher Lutz died on March 15 at age 88. He first joined First Church in the 1940s, then left for a time, and rejoined in 1956. He was a very prominent member in his time serving as Treasurer for many years, as Moderator, on the Search Committee that called John Mack, and many other duties on behalf of First Church. A memorial service was held on March 29 at The Virginian in Fairfax where he lived.

CLUSTER GROUP MEETINGS:

The transition task group is sponsoring a series of cluster groups focused on pastoral leadership needs for the near and distant future. The task group will provide reflection questions, consolidate all the learnings from both the cluster groups and meetings with moderators and the search committee, and then make recommendations to the congregation born out of all that has been learned.

You are invited to attend one of the following meetings to share your insights. Please RSVP to the cluster group host. All are welcome to participate in the discussions, including youth. Children are welcome at all locations, and childcare will be provided on Sunday.



- Friday, April 8th, 6pm, **Kenya and Dwight Davis's** house, (609)510-9718, [dwightmd@gmail.com](mailto:dwrightmd@gmail.com), 4914 7th Street N.E., Washington, DC 20017, near the Ft. Totten Metro station. Potluck dinner - bring a dish to share.
- Saturday, April 9th, 2pm, **Susan and Doug Anderson's** house, (301)897-0782, sdgrmt@verizon.net, 9815 Parkwood Drive, Bethesda, MD 20814. Bring finger food to share.
- Saturday, April 9th, 5pm, **Carolyn and John Marsh's** house, (703)534-0215, jdmrsh_ arlington@yahoo.com, 1419 N. McKinley Road, Arlington, VA 22205. Potluck dinner - bring a dish to share.
- Sunday, April 10th, 2:30pm, First Trinity Lutheran, RSVP to **Marian Drake**, (202) 253-2733, mariandrake@yahoo.com.



CHURCH BUILDING UPDATE

We are in the countdown to moving back to 10th and G — 7 months! The building is moving along well:

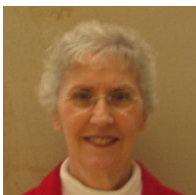
- The glass exterior is now installed on floors 3-10.
- The exterior brick work is moving rapidly, and we are especially pleased with the quality of the masonry.
- The Sanctuary light box framing is in progress.
- Interior walls are under construction, so it is easier to understand the spaces.
- After much angst and delay, we located a foundry in Idaho to fabricate the tombasil metal panels for the exterior column sculpture with banner arm. Aurelie Paradiso, our project architect, visited the foundry and felt that they understood what we wanted and were fully capable of providing it.
- **Peg Lorenz, Byron Adam** and **Meg Maguire** spent March 28 in NYC running around to showrooms to find furnishings for the church living room that fit both style and budget.
- We are beginning to offer some opportunities for small groups from the church to tour the site on designated week days after 3:45 PM when workers have left. If you are interested in joining a tour at this time, contact **Meg Maguire** at megmaguireconsultant@msn.com.
- And much more.... Stay tuned.



SERVICE SATURDAYS

You have two opportunities in April to serve the city. Remember that our goal is to have 100% of the church participate in some capacity in one of the service events.

- **April 9th**: Celebrate Earth Day by helping clean up the Anacostia Watershed from 8:30 to 11:30 am. Sign up by going to www.anacostiaws.org/rsvp/earth-day. Select the Kingman Island location. Then drop Kim Darling a note so we know to look for you. You must register on this site to participate. Kim has waivers for anyone under 18 years of age.
- **April 30th**: Volunteer with Hands on DC's annual Work-a-Thon to help clean up and beautify DC public schools. Sign up at <http://handsondc.kintera.org>, select the First Congregational UCC team. You must register by April 17th to participate.



Barbara Brown Zikmund (BBZ) writes: "I am in the process of blocking out some tentative preaching dates during June, July and August. When we get a transition minister we may need to rearrange some Sundays; however, I would like to get things blocked out before we all get our vacations firmed up. Preaching at First Church is not always done by ordained people. If you would like to preach some summer Sunday, please speak to me next Sunday."

Also, on behalf of the Outreach and Membership Commission, she writes: "The church directory is a vital resource for the life of our church because it allows us to get to know each other. For the same reason we want to remind everyone to wear name tags. We know that they are a nuisance, but during these months of transition it is important that new people feel welcome and that we greet each other by name. Having an "in group that doesn't need



nametags" does not create a climate where everyone feels welcome. Please make the effort. Start by wearing your name tag when you pick up your church directory."



"Poetry is nearer to vital truth than history."

Plato

On April 17th, Palm Sunday, you are invited to join me in a Lenten Adult Nurture as we read and contemplate a small poem.



Poetry can be a transformative and redemptive power, especially if we bring full attention to the words read aloud, opening our hearts, minds, and physical being to understanding God in many layered expression. Contemplative poetry reading requires us to take a new view of word and time. Together in community we begin to experience time, not as a commodity, but as a sacrament revealing God to us in the moment.

During Lent, before our Adult Nurture on April 17th, you may intentionally set aside a few moments to think about poems that have stirred your heart in the past. Perhaps there is a poem that has revealed a deeper meaning of life to you that you would care to revisit during Lent. You may even want to open that old anthology sitting on your book shelf from times past to see if any particular verse says, "Read me!" If time permits, after contemplating a poem together, we will share important poems in our lives as we consider the mystery of God together, before entering Holy Week.

Grace and Peace,
Bonnie

GREEN ACTION TIP



Marie Rietmann, Green Action Committee member, reports that if you live in DC you can get a **free home energy audit** via the District's Department of the Environment. Google: *DDOE: Free Home Energy Audits* and learn details. Based on a home energy rating system, auditors will suggest specific cost-effective, energy-efficient improvements to reduce your home's operational costs and improve comfort. The audit measures insulation levels, window efficiency, heating and cooling system efficiency, the solar orientation of the house, and the water heating system. Marie adds that if you live in a condominium, like she does on Capitol Hill, you have to convince everyone in the building to have the audit done at the same time. You may be sure, she's working on it.





APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Carolyn Davis, Suzanne Snyder, Jennie Hunt, Virginia Bushmiller, Patrick Francis Darling LaGamma, Lucille Dickinson, Judith Gray, Jannie Champ, Laura Mecagni, Vivian Telgarsky, Robert Mann-Thompson, Deborah Culp, Sue Lake, Melinda Reed, Nancy Withbroe, Barbara Hayes, Maria Snyder

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS FOR MARCH

- 3 Anne & Richard Griffis, Dwight & Kenua Davis
- 10 Jessica & Scott Prentice, Suzanne Snyder, Virginia Gaddis
- 17 Kristy Goodfellow, Cindy Mazur, Marka & David Hayes
- 24 Randy Herrick-Stare, James Estes, Barbara Hayes, Priscilla Waters



CALENDAR FOR APRIL

Wednesday, April 6

5:30 pm – Service of Installation for Ron Hopson
 4:30pm – Volunteers at Thrive DC
 6:30pm - Worship Commission
 7:00pm - Finance Commission



Thursday, April 7

7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal

Friday, April 8

6:00pm - Cluster Group Meeting

Saturday, April 9

9:00am - Service Project: Celebrate Earth Day by participating in the Anacostia Watershed Cleanup
 2:00pm - Cluster Group Meeting
 5:00pm - Cluster Group Meeting

Sunday, April 10

11:00am - Care of Parish
 12:00pm - Bible Workbench
 12:15pm - Choir Rehearsal
 1:00pm - Worship Service
 Green Second Sunday Offering - Earth Sunday
 2:00pm - Fellowship Hour

Tuesday, April 12

6:30pm – Council

Thursday, April 14

7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, April 17 - Palm Sunday

12:00pm - Bible Workbench
 12:15pm - Choir Rehearsal
 1:00pm - Worship Service
 2:00pm - Fellowship Hour
 2:30pm - Nurture: "Poetry & Prayer: The Practice of Contemplative Reading"

Wednesday, April 20

7:00pm - Homecoming Task Force

Thursday, April 21

6:00pm - Facilities Commission
 7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, April 24 - Easter

12:00pm - Bible Workbench
 12:15pm - Choir Rehearsal
 1:00pm - Worship Service
 2:00pm - Fellowship Hour
 2:30pm - Nurture: Easter

Thursday, April 28

Deadline for Gabriel's Horn
 7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal

Saturday, April 30

Service Project: Volunteer with Hands on DC's annual Work-a-Thon to help clean up and beautify DC public schools

Website: www.fccuccdc.org; Email: fcc@fccuccdc.org
 Phone Office: 202-628-4317
 Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 am – 2:00 pm