

First Congregational United Church of Christ in DC

# GABRIEL'S HORN

July 2011

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

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**W**e often say to friends, “keep in touch.” In fact if we don’t do that, friendship wanes and community becomes hollow. So as First Church prepares to return to 10th and G, it is time to examine how we “keep in touch.”

For years this monthly Gabriel’s Horn newsletter has been an important way for members to get news, learn about new things, and nurture community. However, these days communications are more and more complicated. News comes over phone lines, and cables, and ends up in many forms in our wired and wireless phones, ipads, computers and postal mail boxes. Some of us don’t even want printed information sent through the postal mail anymore because, by the time we get it, it is out of date. We like the speed of electronic communication. But then again, do we know what we like and what we want? What forms of communication do each of us think will nourish our church?

Outreach and Membership Commission is taking a hard look at our “Communication Challenge.” We are working with a web designer to update our church website. We are also trying to evaluate ALL of our communications and determine where we should streamline, cut back or expand. How do we want to get information? Do we want it printed in the Sunday Worship Folder, announced verbally in worship, sent via random email notices, packaged in weekly e-newsletters sent on the same day each week, or emailed or postal mailed once a month (Gabriel’s Horn), etc.? Is it important that every member of the church have the power to send email messages to the whole church? This is a great opportunity for us to think about what we want to know and how we want to be told. There are many options.



In the next month every church member will receive a survey on the computer and/or a phone call to talk about options. What works for you? Please help us get this information by returning the questionnaire online or in a paper envelope. Please send the members of the Commission your thoughts about what you like and what you see other organizations doing that we might emulate.

Obviously, at FCC communication is more than simply the transfer of information. In a church, we care about each other. We gather to share the gospel (good news) with each other and to strengthen our capacity to live faithfully in the world. Church communication is about sharing ideas and concerns, not just news. Please respond to the questionnaire when you get it and help us strengthen our community. I believe that when we have a healthy internal network of communication, we will be able to

attract visitors and new members more effectively. When we are uninformed and disjointed in our communication it shows.

*Barbara Brown Zikmund "BBZ"*

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## NEWS FROM AROUND THE PARISH

*by Joan King*



**W**e were happy to welcome **Pat Ashbrook** back to church on June 26. **Mari Castellanos** preached a great sermon that day just prior to her departure for the General Synod in Tampa, FL. Also attending from First Church were **Diana de Molina** and **Sandy Sorensen**; plus **Byron Adams** and **Ellen Bushmiller**, who also went to the GLBT gathering before the official opening.

**Marie Rietmann** reports as Delegate Pro Tem for First Church at the Central Atlantic Conference annual meeting. **BBZ** also attended the CAC as well as other First Church friends, Rev. **Michael Joseph**, missionary to Colombia and associate member of First Church, and **Thomas Vesterling** accompanying a delegation from the Evangelical Church in Middle Germany. Rev. Geoffrey Black is our church's new president, and we look forward to his visit to our church that is scheduled for February 26, 2012.



At the CAC, Robert Orr, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Strategic Planning in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, began his address to us saying, "I love this church." Dr. Orr is a member of Park Avenue Christian Church in New York City, which recently affiliated with the UCC. He believes people of faith are better able to weather challenges. About the progressive-thinking, inclusive UCC, he said, "we need you more than ever." He told us "we are on the cusp of being able to end poverty" and that no effort for good will succeed without a mobilized faith base behind it. "This is a wonderful church and it has been prophetic." Dr. Orr grew up in the same church as John Deckenback, CAC conference minister.

**Peter Tracey** and **Karen Pence** ran the Bill Degnan 5K at Rehoboth Beach, and they both finished third in their age groups. For Peter, finishing third is slow (he has had a good racing season this summer), but it was Karen's first ever medal in running! Our congratulations to them both.



**Dwan Reese** and Peter Parsons were married at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, June 24, at The Gazebo at Frady Park in Falls Church. Their children (**Maya King** and Eli, Spencer and Miller Parsons) were their attendants. We send them our best wishes.

### COMINGS AND GOINGS:

**Ann Bushmiller** reports that her son, **Lucas Cacoza**, is spending four weeks at a language immersion camp for Mandarin Chinese in Oberlin, OH, and that her daughter, **Nicole Cacoza**, is home for the summer after a great first year at Brown. **Suzanne Snyder's** son, **Tom Wilson**, is off on a two-week vacation the end of June with his high school friend Alek and Alek's parents to New Orleans and Houston. He will be back sometime over the Independence Day weekend. **Ben Smolinsky-Withbroe** is spending his fifth and final summer at camp in Maine, hiking in the Green

Mountains and canoeing through New England's rivers. His brother **Peter** is enjoying day camp and being an only child, temporarily. We all are very proud of him for making the honor roll all four quarters this year. **Emily Marsh** has a summer internship in Serbia and will join the family when they go to Europe. **Nora** tells us that the **Marsh family** (except for **Dwight** because he does not want to go) will be part of the group of 37 family and friends who going to Elba, Italy for a week at the end of July.

**Liz Warren** was in San Francisco in June with their daughter and two granddaughters. **Joan King** just returned from a trip on Amtrak to visit family and friends in her hometown of Elkhart, Indiana. **Jamey Moore** is currently spending two weeks in Provincetown, Massachusetts. **Lucille Dickenson** and her sister Marian left June 29 for a six week cross country motor trip -- with Lucille's dog. **Peg Lorenz** will be leaving on July 22 for England and a cruise around the coast of Norway.

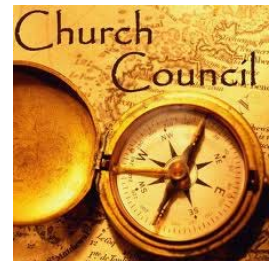


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## COUNCIL CAPSULE

June 13, 2011 meeting



**B**arbara Hayes was unable to attend the rescheduled Council meeting, so she based these comments on **Grace Bassler's** excellent minutes. The Transition Selection Team has received twelve resumes and narrowed them down to three. **Lucille Dickinson** reported that Finance recommends that the families related to memorials in our endowment fund be asked for permission to use these funds for the furnishing fund. The congregation will need to vote on this. Council considered and accepted **Bonnie Hardy's** review, which includes many strong, positive assessments. The future year and five priorities identified by Council will be discussed by a small group, including Bonnie. Council identified considerations in renting space in our new facility, including the priority that usage by First Church comes first on Sunday morning. Council recognized the need for a master calendar reflecting our use of the new building; the Homecoming Celebration Task Force is also working on this.

**Mike Zawada** reported that the Social Action Commission is considering their overall direction and issues and core value criteria. Their charter was discussed by Council and a few suggestions were made. **Nancy Withbroe** reported that Christian Ed has been considering the frequency and appropriate blend of subject matter for nurtures. **Ann Bushmiller** reported that Worship is still struggling to line up lay worship leaders. **Nora Marsh** reported that Care of the Parish is coordinating with homecoming activities and planning an indoor Homecoming Picnic in September. **BBZ** reported that Outreach and Membership is moving forward with a communications plan for both members and people outside the church. They will recommend bylaws revisions pertaining to upkeep of membership records, and they are also working on the web design. Their charter was considered and Council made a few suggestions.

Moderator **Nan McConnell** introduced the need for a short-term pastoral care person. Council approved adding six hours per month to Bonnie Hardy's work hours for the next three months. She will be a point person for pastoral care. Kay Rodgers will not return in the fall. One of her requirements as an intern is supervision by a minister at our church, which we cannot guarantee.

*Barbara Hayes*

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The Council realized in June that every Commission needs to join the Homecoming Task Force in planning for our return -- setting dates, reserving space for events, and thinking about activities in our new church. The reality of the return came more apparent as potential users of our space are being encouraged to have conversations with the Facilities Commission. Council decided that First Church should outline our space needs first to provide the framework to consider long term commitments from other users. The most exciting aspect of this reality is that it means our return is coming soon! All Commissions are requested to put planning for the next six months on their agendas and to relay their information to a master calendar that Council is developing starting in July. All very exciting.

*Nan McConnell*



### REPORT ON SITE DEVELOPMENT

Our beautiful new church home is rapidly taking shape:

- The Sanctuary stone floors have been laid and covered in paper; next week the masons will begin to lay stone on the columns as well.
- The walls are up in the Pastor’s Suite, and the offices promise to be some of the nicest in town.
- The exterior light boxes are in place, creating an interesting façade for the building as a whole and a bright, sun-filled space in the Chapel.
- The tombasil metal panels -- a stunning feature of the project — that will clad the load bearing exterior column at the entry to the church - are expected to arrive from Idaho within the month.

On Saturday, June 25, the National Building Museum featured a walking tour of the construction site. About 40 Museum members attended. On hand to help lead the two groups through the building and to carry the message of our project were **Barbara Brown Zikmund** and **Richard Griffis**. BBZ reports that there was substantial interest in how we decided to undertake this project and what we have been through to make a reality.



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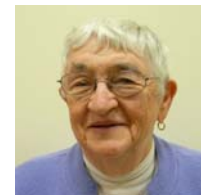
Please let me know if you would like to tour the building and we will try to arrange for that later this summer.

*Meg Maguire, Chair  
Site Development Task Force*

## WE'RE OVER THE TOP -- ALMOST!



**T**he Furnishings Fund \$80,000 financial goal has been reached (hooray!). Many, many thanks to everyone who made a financial gift or pledge. Your generous responses mean that the design team can move ahead with ordering the architect-designed furnishings for our new sanctuary.



And any extra money raised will go for items in other parts of the church – the narthex, for instance – which are not currently in the budget.

BUT -- and it's a big BUT: We still haven't reached our main goal, which is that EVERY member of the church will make a gift, no matter how big or small, to the Fund.

If you have simply forgotten or are still thinking about it, please make your contribution or pledge now. You can give in memory of or in honor of someone; you can spread your payments through 2012. Only Dwight will know who gives what. The important thing is for us ALL to have our names in the Donors' Book.

Waiting to hear from you.

*Fredda Sparks and Peg Lorenz*



*“In a long-ago time, when long-ago peoples  
were building cathedrals and raising up steeples,  
they crafted stone creatures and set them on perches  
to guard and protect and watch over the churches.”*

*From the book:  
God Bless the Gargoyles  
by Dav Pilkey*

**T**welve of us from First Church met on the steps of the National Cathedral this past Sunday. We gathered for our first summer field trip to take the Gargoyle Tour offered by the National Cathedral.

For 45 minutes we learned all about how the National Cathedral did not plan on having gargoyles or grotesques represented on their gothic style cathedral. It wasn't until several years after the initial planning that the bishop realized money could be raised for the cathedral by designing gargoyles and grotesques. Architects, stone carvers, and donors worked together to design specific gargoyles and grotesques, each with a story. “I know what a gargoyle is, but how is it different from a grotesque?” questioned one small observer. Our tour guide explained that gargoyles were originally designed with two possible functions. They were to keep away evil spirits and provide water drainage away from the cathedral structures. Later grotesques were designed to look like gargoyles without the drain function. Grotesques are designed on plaques and they are not three dimensional.



After the informative slide show and explanation, the group broke up for the outside tour of the cathedral. Some with binoculars stared high up into the blue sky at the flying buttresses under the gables where the carved

creatures hid. Others walked around the cathedral taking in the stained glass windows and the beautiful quiet place that is available to all faiths right in the heart of Washington, D. C.

This multigenerational event introduced everyone to the historical information and legends surrounding the lore of gargoyles and grotesques, important symbols from the medieval history of the church.

*Bonnie Hardy*

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### COMING UP:

**D**uring the month of July, our church will welcome a diverse group of preachers:



**July 3: Diana Gomez de Molina** is a staff chaplain at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center and also worked as a hospice chaplain; this year, she was certified as a Board Certified Professional Chaplain. Diana worked as a clinical mental health counselor for over 25 years before "adjusting" her career to chaplaincy. She loves to travel and go birding with her wife Mari Castellanos. Diana received her Masters in Community Counseling from Barry University and her M.Div. from Howard University School of Theology.

**July 10: Anne Troy** is bi-vocational. She serves as pastor and Executive Director of the UCC's Shaw Community Ministry (SCM) located in DC. She also serves as the Assistant General Counsel for Nuclear Safety, Liability and Nonproliferation in the federal government. SCM's mission is to enhance the lives and expand the opportunities of children, youth, and adults of the Shaw community by maintaining respectful relationships and working through partnerships and collaborations with local organizations and members of the community, by encouraging residents to become responsible, well-rounded, and productive citizens, and by mentoring and providing opportunities that increase knowledge and encourage youth and families to reach their full potential. Anne Troy has a BA from the City College of New York, a JD from Case Western Reserve Law School, an LLM in Government Contracts from George Washington University and a MDIV from Wesley Theological Seminary. First Church regularly makes Shaw Community Ministries one of its "second Sunday offerings" each summer.



**July 17: Rev. Bonnie Hardy** is our Associate Minister for Christian Education, and she is a resident of Alexandria, Virginia. Bonnie and her partner, Navy Chaplain Bill Middleton, share six children, two dogs, and five feral cats in their blended family. Rev. Hardy is also a Spiritual Director in the Northern Virginia/Maryland/DC area. In her spare time she knits and volunteers at the Center for Prayer and Pilgrimage at the National Cathedral. She also writes for Pilgrim Press in the new Faith Practices series.

**July 24: Sandy Sorensen** currently serves as Director of the United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries, Washington, DC office. Sandy has served in a variety of capacities in her over 20 years of experience in the national setting of the United Church of the Christ, including work in communications and policy advocacy on civil rights, justice for women and media access. Sandy received a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Grinnell College and went on to earn her Master of Divinity degree from Yale University Divinity School in 1990. She is a life-long fan of the Chicago White Sox and loves Gummi Bears.





**July 31: Sidney D. Fowler** is Interim Senior Minister at Westmoreland Congregational UCC in Bethesda. Fowler also directed the lectionary project of the Human Rights Campaign and teaches with Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation. He served for 14 years on the national staff in areas including curriculum, spiritual formation, worship, and church vitality. He is author of *What Matters to You? Matters to Us: Engaging Six Vital Themes of Our Faith* and numerous curriculum projects. Recently he served as one of three UCC representatives to the Reformed and Roman Catholic seven-year dialogue that led to mutual recognition of baptism. Fowler has an M.Div from Duke Divinity School and earned his Ed.D. in religion and education from Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University.

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On behalf of **Social Action and Awareness**, **Mike Zawada** tells us that the Second Sunday offering in May went to Sowing Peace (Sembrandopaz), a peace-building organization on the Caribbean coast of Colombia directed by Ricardo Esquivia. Contributions totaled \$940. The Second Sunday offering in June was for Stengthening the Church, which funds new church starts and invigorating existing congregations, nurtures lay and pastoral leadership, builds youth and young adult ministries, and supports the God is Still Speaking Ministry. Contributions totaled \$394. Also recently, many contributed to the UCC Spring Storms Appeal, totaling \$155 as of June 19.

The **Outreach and Membership Commission** tells us: In order to provide a way for new members to connect with our church, even before we are back at 10th and G, the Outreach and Membership Commission plans to hold several informal gatherings to bring people together to share ideas and enjoy fellowship during the summer and the fall. These gatherings will meet in a downtown restaurant at 6 pm on a week night for drinks, a light supper and conversations about things that matter in life. The first evening will be **Thursday, July 21 at 6 pm**. We are still trying to locate a place. We want to keep the price low and make it possible for people to come and go as their schedule permits. We will announce the place soon. For now, however, hold the date. We are calling these gatherings “CONVERSATIONS TO NOURISH BODY AND SPIRIT”. **Barbara Brown Zikmund** “BBZ” will facilitate the first session. We are open to suggestions about topics. We might share favorite poems. We might discuss a film. We might invite a guest speaker. Please invite friends who could be interested in this “meet-up” to join us. Plan to come yourself. All ages are welcome.



## JULY BIRTHDAYS

Tadashi Andrew Dodge; Kim Darling; Sid Fowler; Ellen Bushmiller; Katharine Ross;  
Paul Smolinsky; Julia Smeltzer; Katherine Williams; Sally Olson;  
Gwen Heard; Eric Steiner; Jamie Moore

## COFFEE HOUR HOSTS FOR JULY

- 3** Byron Adams, Peg Lorenz, Randy Jones, Barbara Rice, Stefani Filak
- 10** Marie Rietmann, Judith Oliver, Nora Marsh, Dwight Marsh
- 17** James Moore, James Estes, Grace & Don Bassler
- 24** Nan & Nick McConnell, Marian Drake, Mark Jensen
- 31** Jennie Hunt, Bob Crosley, Peter Byrne, Karen Tramontano



## CALENDAR FOR JULY

### Sunday, July 3

12:00pm - Bible Workbench  
1:00pm - Worship Service  
Preacher: Diana Gomez de Molina  
2:00pm - Fellowship Hour

### Wednesday, July 6

6:30pm - Worship Commission  
7:00pm - Finance Commission

### Sunday, July 10

11:00am - Care Of Parish  
Christian Education, and Outreach & Membership  
Commissions meet at the Building Museum  
12:00pm - Bible Workbench  
1:00pm - Worship Service  
Preacher: Anne Troy  
2:00pm - Fellowship Hour

### Tuesday, July 12

6:30pm - Council  
7:00pm - Social Action & Awareness

### Sunday, July 17

12:00pm - Bible Workbench  
1:00pm - Worship Service  
Preacher: Bonnie Hardy  
2:00pm - Fellowship Hour

### Wednesday, July 20

7:00pm - Homecoming Task Force

### Thursday, July 21

6:00pm - Facilities Commission  
6:00 pm – Conversations to nourish body & spirit

### Sunday, July 24

12:00pm - Bible Workbench  
1:00pm - Worship Service  
Preacher: Sandy Sorensen  
2:00pm - Fellowship Hour

### Thursday, July 28

Deadline for Gabriel's Horn

### Sunday, July 31

12:00pm - Bible Workbench  
1:00pm - Worship Service  
Preacher: Sid Fowler  
2:00pm - Fellowship Hour

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