

First Congregational United Church of Christ in DC

# GABRIEL'S HORN

October 2011

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

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## OUR JOURNEY CONTINUES

First Church has two upcoming milestones:

- On **October 16**, FCUCC welcomes The Rev. Dr. Sid Fowler as our Transitional Minister. Rev. Fowler is completing an interim at Westmoreland Congregational UCC and is coming to First Church at a time of great excitement and energy around our move back to 10th and G Street. (See article on the Rev. Fowler in this Horn.) Please note dates and times for gatherings in homes in the next month to welcome Rev. Fowler.)
- On **November 13**, FCUCC will hold the first service in our new space at 10th and G Streets NW. All are invited to return to 10th and G for worship at **10:30 a.m.** on November 13. More to come with details about parking in the building and planned activities.

Our faith journey continues. Please join us.

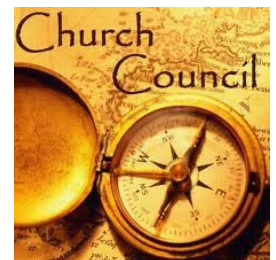
*Nan McConnell, Moderator*



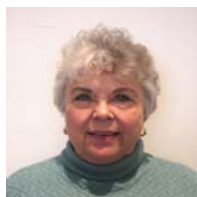
## CHURCH COUNCIL

September 13, 2011 meeting:

**Sid Fowler** was present and led us in an opening meditation. **Nan McConnell** reported that the nominating committee will consist of **Gail Sonnemann, John Smeltzer, and Joan King**. **Randy Jones** has been moved to Carroll Manor for physical therapy following his back surgery. We will have cluster meetings soon after Sid begins work with us to welcome and get to know him. We will begin to move the office into the new building the first week in November. The big Homecoming Weekend will be on November 12 and 13. The design of our new logo is underway; we don't want to rush this project. **Lucille Dickinson** gave a detailed treasurer's report, including what we can expect in terms of expenses and income in the new building. The Music Committee has requested funding for musicians and publicity for the Messiah Sing-along; Council approved additional funds. On the calendar, the three-part nurture on the UCC (affectionately known as BBZ 101) will



be moved to February so that we can have Lenten nurtures in March. The Alcohol Policy draft from Facilities was reviewed and sent back to Facilities with some additional questions. On October 9 there will be a hearing on the proposed investment policy and investment commission. **Meg Maguire** presented a proposal for a plaque to be placed in the new church recognizing those who have been a part of the planning for and construction of the new building. Council approved a plaque and requested further consideration of the size and placement. **Grace Bassler** has been making progress on an updated church roster, and hopes to have it ready to present to the Fall Meeting. Council is very grateful to Grace for her work on this important project. The agenda for the Fall Meeting (October 16) was considered. **Anne Mascolino** reported that our booth at the Penn Quarter Festival was highly successful; Outreach and Membership collected over 100 email addresses from people. She also reported that the MLK Library is delighted we're coming back, and would like to do some things together. Council thanked Anne for all the work that went into this. **Richard Griffis** brought a proposal from Social Action and Awareness to talk to **Michael Joseph** about a mission trip to Columbia after Easter; Council endorsed the idea. Two new members will join on Fall Meeting Sunday.



## NEWS FROM AROUND THE PARISH

by Joan King

**W**e welcome a new baby into our flock. Natalie Adej Jensen was born September 13 to **Marian Drake** and **Mark Jensen**. She weighed in at 7 lbs 15 oz and was 21 inches in length and the whole family enjoying their time at home.

**Cynthia Hobbs** wrote: "I had hinted at an extension to our stay in Jamaica when we visited this summer. I can now confirm that we will be here for three more years. I have signed a contract with the InterAmerican Development Bank. I start my new job on October 1<sup>st</sup> as Senior Education Specialist, based in Kingston. We're thrilled to be staying, even though we're sad that we don't get to see more of you all. The children are settled in at the American International School of Kingston - the twins are in kindergarten and Dylon is in first grade. They do tennis and swimming after school, and Dylon has started cello lessons. And Edmond continues to work on a carpentry project at one of our favourite hotels in the unspoiled northeast coast of Port Antonio. So all is good. Come and visit! (e-mail addresses as of 1 Oct. will be [chobbs18@hotmail.com](mailto:chobbs18@hotmail.com), [cynthiah@iadb.org](mailto:cynthiah@iadb.org), [chafed01@yahoo.com](mailto:chafed01@yahoo.com))."

**Anne** and **Richard Griffis** attended the 7 Billion Actions event of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) at National Geographic, one of many collaborating partners. The event theme was *7 Billion People: Counting on Each Other-Unleashing the Power of Women and Girls*. Speakers included Monique Coleman, actress and singer, who is the first UN Youth Champion. There will be 7 billion of us on planet earth by the end of 2011. This is a time to showcase stories, connections and actions on achievements as well as a time of unprecedented challenge for the future of the planet and inhabitants concerning poverty/inequality, young people, environment, aging, urbanization, health and rights, etc. Watch for the international launch Oct. 24-31. [www.7billionactions.org](http://www.7billionactions.org).

We are told to save the dates of November 12 and 13 on our calendar for the wonderful move back to our new church at 10<sup>th</sup> and G. An opportunity to tour our new building is being planned for Saturday evening, the 12<sup>th</sup>, along with a pot luck dinner and variety show. Then we will have our first worship service on Sunday. How exciting!!! Details will be forthcoming.



Plan to attend the October 20 MeetUp Conversations to Nourish Body and Spirit.

Outreach and Membership Commission is continuing informal conversations led by BBZ. We meet monthly on the third Thursday at NOODLES ON 11 (an Asian Noodle Shop at 11th and I St/New York Ave NW) at 6 pm.

We are trying to attract downtown workers and Penn Quarter residents. Please sign up, even if you cannot come very often. Go to <http://www.meetup.com/Washington-Meetup-Conversations-to-Nourish-Body-and-Spirit/> Click on “join us” in the upper right corner and it will prompt you for your name, your email address and a password you create. The theme for our October MeetUp will discuss how art shapes our spirits.

### IN OUR PRAYERS:

**Randy Jones** sends this note: “I am now home from both the hospital and rehab facility following my spinal surgery. I'm recovering at an encouraging rate, but there's still plenty of pain and weakness to keep me out of work for quite a while. I would readily welcome calls and visits, and some help with household chores would be a godsend. By the way, I saw **Claricia Cummings** at Carroll Manor, and she sends her love to all.” We will continue to remember him in our prayers.



We celebrated **Jim Green's** remarkable life on September 24, and we keep **Meg Maguire** and her family in our prayers. We also remember in our prayers **Jannie Champ, Claricia Cummings, Polly Gordon, Marka** and **Alexis Joy Hayes, Barbara Hayes' brother John, Nathan Jernigan, Brooks Pumphrey, Regina Saxton,** and **Karen Tramontano.** **Kathi Wolfe** has asked us to also pray for her friend, Melissa Reeder, who has serious cancer. Melissa is 30-something and lives in Atlanta with her husband Alex and three little girls aged 3-9.



### (RE)INTRODUCING THE REV. SID FOWLER

Council has entered into a covenant agreement with the **Rev. Sid Fowler** to be our transitional minister for the next 2-5 years. His first Sunday will be October 16<sup>th</sup>. Sid may be familiar to many of you as he's been a member of First Church since 2006. We've not seen much of him the past three years as he's been working as an interim minister first at Hope UCC in Alexandria, VA and then at Westmoreland UCC in Bethesda, MD. Prior to coming to the DC area, he worked for the National Church, for Pilgrim Press developing curriculum (including a stint with our own Bonnie Hardy), and as a pastor at a variety of congregations. He has a Master of Divinity from Duke University and a Doctor of Education in the Field of Religion and Education from Union Theological Seminary/Columbia University.

While Sid comes to us with a very impressive resume, it was his heart for ministry combined with his understanding of our congregation that set him apart from other candidates. Sid brings a deep spirituality to everything he does and really encourages church members to see our work as distinct from that of any other non-profit organization. He also brings gifts in the areas of pastoral care, worship planning and administration. But what really moved the search committee was the depth of understanding of where we are as a congregation and the tension between the different tasks the transition task group identified. In his cover letter Sid wrote,

“I am drawn to this position because it is a distinctive opportunity to do two things that I love and am called to: strengthening a church in transition and visioning a new future. It seems First Church is tending to two callings at the same time. One calling is similar to the tasks of effective interim ministry.... At the same time, there is another call...similar to church planting. This call is more a turn outward. This call can be an opportunity for discovering the emerging community around 10<sup>th</sup> and G.... This is a rare and thrilling moment. God is calling amazing things from you.”

Care of Parish will be sponsoring a series of potlucks in October so that we can all meet Sid and his partner Jeffrey Catts. Details are below.



## SECOND SUNDAY OFFERING

### Neighbors in Need:

**T**raditionally, in October, First Church joins with other congregations in the UCC to receive **Neighbors in Need**, a special mission offering to support ministries of justice and compassion in the United States. This year we will take that offering on Sunday, October 9, and the proceeds, as always, will go toward a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, direct service projects, and the Council for American Indian Ministry. You can read about many of them in the materials at the back of the church on October 2 and 9.

### **But the 2011 NIN offering will be different. We're going global!**

The world is now our neighborhood and our neighbors are suffering. The devastating drought and famine in East Africa have moved our denomination to double its NIN goal this year to raise an additional \$111,111 to feed the starving people in Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia. "It would be irresponsible for our justice-minded, global mission church to ignore the famine crisis in Africa," said the Rev. M. Linda Jaramillo of the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries. "The crisis in East Africa demands a strong UCC response."



If you agree, reach a little deeper into your pocketbook on October 9 when we take the NIN offering. The SAAC will divide the collection between traditional NIN goals and African famine relief. **The need is huge but so are our hearts.** Please be generous.

Fredda Sparks for the Finance Commission.

At nurture on October 9, the Finance Commission will provide an overview of the proposed Investment Commission and conduct a Q&A session. The Fall Congregation Meeting will be held on October 16.

### COMING UP:

**T**he Mainzer Donchor will give a concert Saturday evening, October 8th at 7:30 at The United Church 20th and G Streets, NW. This famous boy choir is one of the most distinguished cathedral ensembles in Europe. They also will join us at our worship service on October 9.

The Social Action and Awareness Commission is leading a group from FCC to participate in the Washington AIDS Walk Saturday morning, October 29. This 5K walk and timed run is open to all ages. We will meet up at Freedom Plaza (14th and Penn Ave, NW). If you cannot participate but would like to contribute they also have the "sleepwalker" option. Contact Jamey Moore if you can participate with your FCC friends or have questions. For more details the website is [www.aidswalkwashington.org](http://www.aidswalkwashington.org).



**Liz Warren** is preparing the next schedule for hosting coffee hours from November 13 until March. Please contact her at [redmldady@yahoo.com](mailto:redmldady@yahoo.com) or at 301-341-1934 to volunteer and/or let her know if you have any preferred or impossible dates in the next few months. Our hospitality is very important to all of us.

## WELCOME SID CLUSTER DINNERS:



As you have heard, **Sid Fowler** will soon arrive as the Transitional Minister of First Church! In order to welcome him and get to know him a bit better, Care of Parish is organizing three cluster dinners in October/November. Please come to at least one of these potluck events and bring your favorite dish.

- Saturday, October 22 at 5:30 pm at the home of **Gail Sonnemann, Sam, Julie and Susanna Brylawski**, 3544 Brandywine Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008. Contact Gail Sonnemann at [gsonnemann@gmail.com](mailto:gsonnemann@gmail.com) or at 202-543-4536 to RSVP.
- Sunday, October 30 at 5:30 pm at the home of **Susan, Doug, Grant and Raine Anderson**, 9815 Parkwood Drive, Bethesda, MD 20814. Contact Liz Warren at [redlady@yahoo.com](mailto:redlady@yahoo.com) or at 301-341-1934 to RSVP.
- Friday November 4 at 6:30 pm at the home of **Carolyn, John, Emily and Graham Marsh**, 1419 North McKinley Road, Arlington, VA 22205. Contact Carolyn Marsh at [carolyn\\_marsh@us.ibm.com](mailto:carolyn_marsh@us.ibm.com) or at 703-534-0215 to RSVP.

All of these events will be child friendly. We look forward to your attendance!



### “Do you know what dog spelled backwards is?”

Two youngsters in our congregation brought amazing news! Just before church they purchased two small kittens at the pet store. They could not wait to get home and play with their new furry friends.

This may seem a familiar story to those who have raised children and who remember the excitement of bringing home a new pet. But for the ears of one who yearns to hear God’s holy work in our young, the news of the new kittens meant a great deal more. Now I wasn’t always this attentive to stories of pets. Not at all. I wasn’t always this attentive until a small boy several years ago taught me how to listen carefully to the remarkable work of the Holy One who moves within us no matter what age.

A couple of years ago I worked with a group of young children who rarely if ever said the word, “God.” I would coax, cajole, play games, sing songs but not one of the youngsters mentioned God unless I literally put the word in their mouth. They talked about karma, oh yeah, they talked all about karma. They also said, “OMG” more times than their parents might have liked, but initiating the word, “God,” did not happen for the entire year I was there.

After some pondering I decided, “Well maybe I am not hearing about God because I’m not listening correctly. Maybe the word God is not being spoken aloud but God is being spoken about through other words.” After this realization, I began to listen to the children very carefully on Sunday morning. I began to see how excited they were to talk about their pets. I noticed how animated they became while planning a Blessing of the Animals for the church, and how enthusiastic they were to pray for the health of their ailing animal friends. Sunday after Sunday I would steer the conversation to God and they would steer the conversation back to a pet hamster named Harry or a Golden Retriever who sprained his paw. Sunday after Sunday I scratched my head and

wondered about how the world had drummed God language out of the lives of these children as they consistently disrupted my lesson plans with their pet stories and concerns.

I wondered until one morning a small boy sauntered up to me after Sunday School and said, “You know pastor Bonnie, you know what dog spelled backward is?” I looked at him long and hard, his grinning smile with the one tooth missing daring me to answer. “Well William, it spells G-o-d.” He nodded and ran off for a cookie while I stood very still in his wake.

Of course. All the while the children spoke about their animals they were telling me about God. They told me about how God cares for creation the way they cared for their pets. They showed me how planning ahead, getting the right leash or cat box helped their animals, as God encourages us to anticipate the needs of others, and they celebrated and mourned the birth and death of their animals with genuine joy and grief, as God accompanies God’s people in similar times of gratitude and loss. They were telling me very clearly about how the Holy One moves within the child as the spirit of caring and love.

So if you can, ask a child about their pets this week. Encourage the small people to tell you absolutely everything and keep your ears open because while they talk, you will be hearing about God and their spiritual understanding. After all, dog spelled backward is GOD. Duh!

*Grace and Peace,  
Bonnie*



## OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Alisa Tanaka-Dodge, Dwan Reece, Julie Brylawski, Karen Byrne, Tom Wilson, Paul Bushmiller, Barbara Brown Zikmund, Ramsey Codding Miller, Carolyn Marsh, Karen Pence, Marliese Warren, Dale Ostrander, Eleanor Gomolinsky Lally, Virginia Gaddis, Abigail McConnell

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## COFFEE HOUR HOSTS FOR OCTOBER

- 2 Stefani Filak, Barbara Rice, Lucille Dickinson
- 9 Susan Anderson, Paul Bushmiller, Ellen Bushmiller, Ann Bushmiller
- 16 Alisa Tanaka-Dodge, Matthew Dodge, Bob & Jennifer Dinkelmeyer
- 23 Randy Herrick-Stare, Jessica & Scott Prentice, Suzanne Snyder
- 30 Liz Warren, Kristy Goodfellow, Barbara Hayes, Priscilla Waters



# CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER

## Monday, October 3

**5:30pm** - Green Action Committee  
**7:00pm** - Social Action & Awareness

## Wednesday, October 5

**6:30pm** - Worship Commission

## Thursday, October 6

**7:30pm** - Choir Rehearsal

## Saturday, October 8

**6:00pm** - German Choir at the United Church,  
at 1920 G Street, NW

## Sunday, October 9

**11:00am** - Care Of Parish  
**12:00pm** - Bible Workbench  
**1:00pm** - Worship Service  
**2:00pm** - Fellowship Hour  
**2:30pm** - Hearing on proposed investment  
commission & policy

## Monday, October 10

Office Closed

## Tuesday, October 11

**6:30pm** – Council

## Thursday, October 13

**7:30pm** - Choir Rehearsal

## Sunday, October 16

**11:00am** - Worship Commission  
**1:00pm** - Worship Service  
**2:00pm** - Fellowship Hour  
**2:30pm** - Fall Congregational meeting

## Wednesday, October 19

**7:00pm** - Homecoming Task Force

## Thursday, October 20

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

## Sunday, October 23

**1:00pm** - Worship Service  
**2:00pm** - Fellowship Hour  
**2:30pm** - Adult Nurture: Sojourners in our Midst:  
Human Trafficking Today

## Thursday, October 27

**7:30pm** - Choir Rehearsal

## Friday, October 28

Deadline for Gabriel's Horn

## Saturday, October 29

Washington, DC AIDS Walk

## Sunday, October 30

**11:00am** - Christian Education  
**1:00pm** - Worship Service  
**2:00pm** - Fellowship Hour

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