

GABRIEL'S HORN

November 2011

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

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"Beloved, now we are children of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be." 1 John 3:2

In this issue of *Gabriel's Horn*, you will read about many transitions occurring here at First Church. From the impending move to the new church, to shifts in dates of events, to welcoming babies and new members, to hearing from me – the transitional minister — for the first time, this is a time of transition.

For quite a while, First Church has been in transition. Changes and moves have occurred where outcomes were not certain. Yet you were open to God and this “not yet factor.” Check out the church office at 3rd Street. If you look carefully, you’ll find Barno, the faithful office manager, hidden behind countless boxes that are piling up daily. Floor-to-ceiling, both goods stored from the past and brand new appliances wait for the not-yet-set moving day to the not-yet ready building. Something is about to happen. Even now there are many signs of the future; but just not yet.

This week, I was inspired by Kenneth Samuel’s UCC devotional about this “Not Yet Factor.” (See the link at <http://www.ucc.org/feed-your-spirit/daily-devotional/the-not-yet-factor.html>). Samuel pastors one of our newer UCC churches, Victory Church in Stone Mountain, GA. He observes our bent toward the future, the not-yet factor, in this way:

“There is a forward momentum to the Christian faith that is absolutely undeniable. No matter what goals we’ve attained or challenges we’ve conquered, there is an element of our faith in Christ that keeps beckoning us toward something more. There is always something yet to be consummated in us, something yet to be realized about us and something yet to be received through us.”

God has called us to this not-yet time, this transition time. For many, the waiting has been a long time. And the transitions have not only been at church, but personal as well. We are grateful to all who have kept good faith through the years. Together, I look forward to making the journey with you – hauling boxes, saying “good bye “ and “hello,” once again familiarizing ourselves with the neighborhood at 10th and G, discerning and celebrating God’s amazing future. Not yet, but soon, very soon.

May the peace of God be yours.
Sid



CHURCH COUNCIL



October 11, 2011 meeting:

Opening: Sid Fowler led us in an opening devotional based on Keo Cavalcanti's sermon the previous Sunday. **Moderator's Report:** Nan McConnell expressed appreciation for the well attended hearing on forming an Investment Commission. The attendees felt it was important for a preliminary commission to begin work now, establishing its purpose and scope, with the understanding that they cannot take any action until the bylaws amendments are approved at the Fall Congregational Meeting, and the Commission is approved at the Annual Meeting. Council approved implementing this idea. **Agenda for Fall Meeting:** Council discussed and approved the following items which will be brought to the congregation for approval at the fall meeting. **O&M Review for Inactive Members –** Anne Mascolino reported the process used to identify members who have not supported the church in any way for some time; O&M would like those members moved to inactive membership. **Electronic Membership Roster –** Grace Bassler has completed the exhaustive job of recreating and updating this roster. Council approved this as our baseline record of membership. Grace will report this at the Fall Meeting. She also has developed a grid of roles and responsibilities for maintaining this roster; this is still under consideration and will be Council's responsibility. **Maintenance of the historic hard-copy records is still under discussion.** **Treasurer's Report -** Lucille Dickinson reported on her Update to the 2011 Budget, and Projections for 2012 (asking budget) and 2013. **Investment Commission –** Lucille and Susan Anderson discussed the changes that have been made to the proposed bylaws revisions as a result of the hearing. **Pastor's Report:** Sid provided and discussed a handout of four integrated circles that identify the purpose of the Transitional Phase at First Congregational UCC. He thinks the time between now and Advent should be a season of Sabbath. **New Members:** Council enthusiastically endorsed Gregory Loizzo and Kyle Coffman for membership; they will join next Sunday. **Move Back Questions:** Meg Maguire reported good progress but a lot yet to be done. She cautioned that work will not be complete when we move in, and it will be a little like camping out for a while. **Pastor Parish Relations Committee:** Will be considered in November. **Evaluating Off-Budget Requests and Expenditures:** Joe Zikmund discussed the need for criteria for evaluating future proposals that are not in the budget. He had prepared an interesting hypothetical example of such a request. **Publicity/PR:** Anne Griffis is working with William Burns on publicity for the Messiah Sing; some of his time can be spent defining our overall publicity needs. **Christian Ed:** The results of background checks on people working with our children will go to Sid and Bonnie. **Facilities:** Peter Byrne is working with Barno on contracts for moving. **Finance:** They are trying to schedule Stewardship Sunday, but this is difficult with the moving target of our first Sunday in the new church. **Outreach and Membership:** The new web site date is being moved to November 1. **Care of Parish:** All the cluster gatherings to meet and greet Rev. Sid Fowler are scheduled and announced. **Social Action and Awareness:** SAAC will be leading the church's participation in the UCC's Mission 1, and are also working on making us a Green Justice Congregation in January through a UCC initiative.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE PARISH

by Joan King



We are delighted to welcome two new members who joined our congregation on October 16. **Gregg Loizzo** grew up in Florida and served in the US Air Force for 9 years before becoming a civil servant. **Kyle Coffman** came from St. Louis, Missouri, and works as a property manager and also is an aspiring screen writer. Gregg and Kyle were married in 2008, and they live at 523 Florida Ave NW #1, Washington, DC 20001, phone (202) 250-3467. Gregory Loizzo, g_loizzo@me.com, Kyle Coffman, shoe1982@aol.com.

BBZ and Joe Zikmund spent a week in Williamsburg at the end of October. In early November BBZ will go to Cleveland for three days for a meeting of the UCC Historical Council on which she serves. Nov.18-21 Joe will attend the Suncoast Jazz Festival in Clearwater Beach, FL. Finally, over the Thanksgiving holiday they will be with family at Barb's sister's home in Columbus, OH.

The Nominating Committee has begun working on filling positions for officers and the commissions for next year, and they would appreciate it if everyone would let them know how you would like to serve – what are your interests and talents? Please speak to **John Smeltzer, Gale Sonnemann, or Joan King** to volunteer.



Prayer Force



IN OUR PRAYERS

Jennie Hunt had back surgery in early October and has spent a couple of weeks in the Hebrew Home rehabilitation facility. She is doing well and expects to go home soon.

Ben Smolinsky Withbroe had a bizarre accident during cross-country practice in which he ran into a steel bench and ended up with 34 stitches in his knee and thigh. He should make a complete recovery but will have to sit out the rest of the season, which is

frustrating because his team was hoping to win the state championship this year.

We also pray for **Jannie Champ, Claricia Cummings** (who we have been delighted to see in church lately), **Virginia Gaddis, Polly Gordon, Randy Jones** (who also has been back in church), **Brooks Pumphrey, and Regina Saxton.**

HELLO G STREET, HERE WE COME! RIGHT BACK WHERE WE STARTED FROM....



After our long sojourn, we are headed back to our historic home on G St., not on Nov. 12 as planned, but a few weeks later (move date still to be determined). Why the delay? It's a small but important detail: The building inspector says we cannot get a certificate of occupancy until the load bearing capacity of the hand railing on the sanctuary stair is redesigned and strengthened. Yes, the devil is in the details!

On Nov. 1, Skanska Development is meeting with Skanska US Building, the contractor, and the various subs — glass, wood, metals — to develop a new schedule on which to base a decision about our exact move in date.

We hope to set a fixed, firm date by Friday, Nov. 4.

The site is still a work in progress — a beautiful space in the making. If you were to visit the site today (Oct. 30) **what would you see?**

- Beautiful stonework in the narthex, sanctuary, stairway, chapel and second floor hallway.
- In Sanctuary, ash panels on walls; walnut benches and walnut chancel floor
- Bright and nearly completed education suite, now being used for building material staging
- Carpeted and ready-to-build-out flex space (2400sf)
- Floor to ceiling glass front doors that bring a full view of the



sidewalk and intersection of 10th and G into the Narthex

- Exterior column clad in tombasil bronze, tree boxes, granite sidewalk
- Unfinished ceiling and water pool in Narthex

What we will not see but can anticipate in the next few months:

- Large entry doors from Narthex to Sanctuary
- Interior glass in Sanctuary light box and elsewhere in Sanctuary; light well from 2nd floor to 1st floor
- An empty, exposed organ chamber (organ is due to arrive Jan. 16 and installation will take about 6-8 weeks)
- Light fixtures that have not been adjusted in height and will be corrected when all other features are in place
- Permanent chairs in sanctuary — these are in storage until more work is completed, hopefully by mid-December. In the meantime, we will use chairs from our Community Hall.
- Kitchen equipment
- Acoustical curtains in back of sanctuary and community hall
- Furniture in all offices and classrooms
- Built-out closets
- Exterior sign stand and banner
- Plants in flower box in alley vest-pocket area next to Library

Our journey began 7.5 years ago when the Facilities Commission recommended, and the congregation adopted, a motion to launch a serious investigation into redeveloping our site. Since then, our talented and committed congregation has worked together to define our building goals, select a developer and gifted architects, manage the complex legal issues with two different developers, and attend to myriad design and furnishing details.

Completion of our building will free us for our core mission of worship and service to our congregation, our city and the world. And for that, let us all say AMEN.

*Meg Maguire,
Site Development Task Force*



Dwight Marsh tells us, and **Peg Lorenz** confirms that the following individuals were members of First Church when they were in the original building, so they soon will have worshiped in all three churches: **Sylvia Duerksen, Barbara Hayes, Peg Lorenz, Dwight Marsh, Ralph and Marlene Ross, and Karen Denny Stanga.**

To see more church pictures please visit:
<http://picasaweb.google.com/fccuccdc>



“People are endowed with a creative and aesthetic sense and can learn to appreciate good design and even become designers themselves.”

e-mail from Meg Maguire to Bonnie Hardy

October, 2011

This past month, Meg Maguire met with the Christian Education Commission to talk about the new education suite in the building at 10th and G. There were commission members and a few other First Church people already hanging around the Building Museum on that rainy October morning.

It seems the Finance Commission was also having a meeting, which resulted in a handful of youngsters waiting for their parents. Now some may have found the young people difficult to have around. After all, we were about the “adult” business of discussing important decisions both financial and decorative. Yet Meg, when she saw the youngsters, immediately invited them all over to her table because she wanted to appreciate their insight. Meg asked each one their opinion, as she spread out the large paper of the church design.

“Here is where we will put the rack for your coats,” she pointed to the paper and the children leaned on their arms to look onto the plan. “Will there be a coat rack?” asked one interested observer. “Or will there be hooks on the wall?” volunteered another.

Meg smiled. “Oh no,” she said excitedly, “your coats are not going to be hung on any old ordinary coat rack or hook. Your coats will be hung on wire leaves, designed to look like ivy on a wall.”

“Really!” exclaimed the interested observers.

Meg went on to ask which colors they wanted, how many individual ivy leaves might be needed, as she described the color scheme for the education suite. The children expressed exciting and imaginative ideas, wanting to build an entire tree of the ivy coat hooks to cover the entire wall. Meg listened, encouraged, stopping to take a few written notes of their thoughts.

Later in the month I received an e-mail from Meg herself. It seems we could afford only some of the ivy leaves, not as many as the group desired. She expressed gentle concern, bringing to mind for me that creativity can be even more exciting if held within a certain parameter, even if that parameter is a financial boundary.

It turned out that we still had plenty of ivy to go around! Meg wanted to know if the children would like to look at the ivy hangers, set them out in a design, and draw on a paper what they thought looked best? She then would ask the installers to follow through and put the design on the wall.

“Of course,” I said, “Absolutely!”

Meg reminded me later that, “Most people who go on to, “become designers — architects, landscape architects (Jeff Catts), interior designers, graphic designers, lighting designers, etc, have or will at one time or another worked on a building.”

Creating the new space at 10th and G provides opportunity even for our youngest congregational participants that may lead to a life time of honoring beauty as expressed in form. Even the interchange of children and adults reminds me of how God speaks to us through the beauty of creating. Creative expression, the give and take of ideas, participating in decisions of how to organize patterned space, brings the awareness of God closer. So close that even the process of designing the space to hang a simple coat becomes an opportunity to observe beauty.



*Grace and Peace,
Bonnie*



A Fable for Our Time (Stewardship Season) or Where's the Stuff?

A man lugs a huge, beautifully wrapped package up the front steps to his house. “Honey! Kids! I’m home! And I have a present for you.”

All come running. “Daddy! Daddy! What’d you bring me?” They untie the elaborate soft silver-and-gold bow. They rip the light blue paper off. They fling the tissue stuffing around the hall.

“Whaaaat?????” comes the disappointed cry. “There’s hardly anything in here. Only a few broken-down toys. We don’t want any of this old stuff.”

“Well,” the dad explains patiently. “If we save the wrappings and ribbon and take very good care of the box, I promise that in a couple of years, it will fill with shiny new toys.” But his words fall on deaf ears as the kids run out the door. “See you, dad. We’re headed over to the neighbors’ house. They have lots of cool stuff.”

Moral: *Make sure you have good stuff in your shiny box.*

OK. So the moral is simplistic and the analogy is a stretch. But the message resonates: Make sure that we at First Church, as we move into our shiny new church, have good “stuff” -- that we continue the dynamic preaching, imaginative music, exciting programming, and compelling mission that are our tradition.



The plans to do just that are in place; they are detailed in the 2012 asking budget. But they come with a price tag. And we do not expect to receive enough rental and investment income next year to support all of them. The choice is clear: Either we increase our income in other ways or we cut programs -- settle for less “stuff” at precisely the time we hope to attract new members.

We are an incredibly resilient and generous congregation. And once again those qualities are being tested. The asking budget calls for a 5% increase in pledge income. How we respond to that call will decide what our programming next year – our “stuff” -- will look like.

If you currently pledge, please continue to do so – and consider a 5% increase. If you do not pledge, think about joining those who do; it helps church leaders plan efficiently. Pledge cards have been mailed out; if you did not receive one, call the office or ask an usher. Please bring them to church on Stewardship Sunday, November 13. Our shiny new box is waiting; let’s make sure it’s filled with the right stuff.

*Fredda Sparks
for the Finance Commission*



CONVERSATIONS TO NOURISH BODY & SPIRIT

Outreach and Membership continues to host early evening conversations to provide space in our lives for "small talk about important things". We meet from 6 to 8 pm on the third Thursday of the month. Last time we shared examples of art that nourishes our souls. On November 17 we will explore the concept of Thanksgiving more deeply. All religious traditions have some thanksgiving rituals and holy days. Why is that? How can we make Thanksgiving more meaningful in our lives? We will talk about when times of thanksgiving have helped us embrace diversity and enriched our lives. When family gatherings at Thanksgiving are difficult, what can we do to make holidays more constructive?

Come with something to share that makes you thankful. We meet at "Noodles on 11" (two blocks north of Metro Center on 11th street.) It is a great location -- easy to get to, and it does not get noisy until we are ready to leave about 8 pm. **Barbara Brown Zikmund** is the facilitator of the conversation.

*Barbara Brown Zikmund
Outreach & Membership*



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

John Smeltzer, Samuel Goff-Glennon, Priscilla Waters, Ann Bushmiller
Amy Dugan, Giacomo Mecagni, Hugh Bushmiller, John Evans-Klock, Marka Hayes

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS FOR NOVEMBER

- 6 John Smeltzer, Susan Anderson, Susie Hayward, Gail Sonnemann
- 13 John Sherry, Joe Zikmund, Barbara Brown Zikmund, Nathan Jernigan
- 20 Grace Bassler, Don Bassler, Gail Sonnemann, Karen Tramontano
- 27 Anne Griffis, Richard Griffis, Randy Herrick-Stare, Liz Warren



CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER

Thursday, November 3

7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal

Friday, November 4

5:30pm - Cluster Dinner at the home of Carolyn Marsh, 1419 N. McKinley Road, Arlington, VA 22205. Contact Carolyn Marsh at carolyn_marsh@us.ibm.com or at [703-534-0215](tel:703-534-0215) to RSVP.

Sunday, November 6

11:00am - Christian Education
1:00pm - Worship Service & Communion
Preaching: Sid Fowler
2:00pm - Fellowship Hour

Monday, November 7

7:00pm - Social Action & Awareness

Tuesday, November 8

6:30pm - Council

Thursday, November 10

6:30pm - Worship Commission
7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, November 13

Stewardship Sunday
1:00pm - Worship Service
Preaching: Sid Fowler
2:00pm - Fellowship Hour

Tuesday, November 15

Deadline for Commissions/Committees/Task Force to submit Annual Reports

Thursday, November 17

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

Sunday, November 20

11:00am - Outreach & Membership Commission
1:00pm - Worship Service
Preaching: Sid Fowler
2:00pm - Fellowship Hour

Wednesday, November 23

7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, November 24

Thanksgiving

Sunday, November 27

Advent starts
1:00pm - Worship Service
Preaching: Bonnie Hardy
2:00pm - Fellowship Hour

Monday, November 28

Deadline to submit articles for Gabriel's Horn

Wednesday, November 30

7:00pm - Homecoming Celebration Task Force

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