

GABRIEL'S HORN



First Congregational United Church of Christ

August 2019

A Message from the Moderator and Assistant Moderator

Dear First Church - It was with a mixture of gratitude and sadness that we said goodbye to Mike Durst in July. We appreciated his thoughtful preaching, his gentle nature, and his caring spirit. We wish him well in addressing his health issues.

Council held a special meeting on July 23 to discuss the issue of pastoral leadership. The Rev. Marvin Silver, Associate Conference Minister, met with us to present the idea of a designated minister. Council approved this approach and hopes to have a Designated Minister in place this year. Please read about the Designated Minister and the advantages for First Church in the Council Capsule for July 23.

We will hold a Nurture on Sunday, August 18 to outline the process of bringing in a Designated Minister, discuss the profile summary statement we are preparing to present to candidates, and answer questions. We plan to hold a second session later in August and will publicize that date after Council meets August 6.

We have a lot planned: from potlucks (August 3 and Sept 7) to a nurture on the designated minister (August 18) to a hymn sing (September 7) to Homecoming (September 8) to an all Church Retreat (October 27). We have great preachers lined up, great music, a dedicated staff, and a caring community.

For those of you who were in Church on Sunday July 21, four of our young people – Marlyse, Patrick, Breanna, and Lily – shared experiences from their trip to the Lakota reservation in South Dakota. It was wonderful to hear their perspectives and appreciate how First Church connected them to another inspiring summer experience. Staying strong for our children and youth and for all of us in this time of change defines our covenant with each other.

Please show up. At times like these being together physically is one of the most important acts of support and love we can provide one another.

Nan McConnell, Moderator
Kim Darling, Assistant Moderator

Special Council Meeting on Hiring a Minister, July 23, 2019

Associate Conference Minister Marvin Silver met with Council to share information about the Designated Ministry option for hiring our next minister. Designated Ministry is used when a congregation is in transition and wishes to address specific priorities or challenges over a time period longer than the typical interim ministry. He suggested hiring a Designated Minister for three years with the option to call this person at the end of the agreement.

Why Designated Ministry?

- Duration contract (2-3 years) defined by First Church
- First Church may **call** the Designated Minister at the end of the contract
- The Conference Office recruits and vets candidates from within or outside the conference
- The contract explicitly addresses the church's priorities for ministry

Why would Designated Ministry be better for First Church than a supply pastor followed by a called pastor?

- Active Conference Office assistance focuses candidate pool and speeds hiring
- Candidates are willing to address priorities that First Church defines
- The pool of candidates broadens to include ministers desiring a term longer than interim, i.e., the potential for a called ministry
- The focus is on candidates with skills and demonstrated abilities to address First Church priorities
- At the end of the Designated Ministry contract the congregation decides whether to end or extend the contract, or to call the minister

Search for a Designated Term Minister

- First Church defines the priorities to be addressed, ministerial duties, and duration of the ministry
- A selection committee reviews applications, hears sermons, interviews candidates, and recommends the best candidate for our needs
- Council approves the recommended candidate and presents the candidate to the congregation for approval
- Duration of the hiring process is shorter than for a called minister
- Pool of candidates considered by the search committee is small

After discussion, Council approved the following next steps:

- Ask the Conference to move forward with the recruitment and hiring process for a Designated Ministry
- By the August 6, 2019 council meeting, the Pastoral Search Group will name a search committee and prepare a 3-5 page priorities for ministry document based on information found within the church profile, and gathered through summer/fall 2019.
- Schedule nurtures in August to engage the congregation in conversations about the Designated Minister process and goals.

Meeting of the First Church Council July 9, 2019

- Associate Minister Sam McFerran thanked all who made possible the youth mission trip to the Lakota reservation in South Dakota with Simply Smiles. Congratulations to childcare staff who graduated this spring. Luis Murillo graduated from college, and Timur Murillo, Mia Young, and Ziyah Holman graduated from high school. In fall 2019 childcare staff will include Timur Murillo returning and Patrick LaGamma.
- Treasurer Nora Marsh reported that First Church will lease a copier from a new company through a less expensive contact. Review of the mid-year financial report shows total church income at 52.8%, including building use at 53% and pledges at 43%. Expenses are at 46.6%.
- Clerk Gail Sonnemann reminded commissions to submit meeting minutes to the senior minister [church office and associate minister] according to the church By-Laws.
- The Called Pastor Search group requested that Council clarify the Personnel Manual text related to employment of members. It is the sense of the Council that a First Church member may apply and be employed as senior minister (interim, called, supply, designated, etc.) Before bringing this clarification to the congregation for approval, Council requested further research and a recommendation as to whether a member hired to be the senior minister must then leave the church when their ministry ends.
- Assistant Moderator Kim Darling reported that our conference minister has recommended that instead of hiring a called pastor, First Church consider hiring a “designated minister” on a 2/3-year contract. Council will hold a special meeting to consider this option.

Mark Your Calendars for These Special Dates

August 18 Nurture on Designated Minister

Bring your coffee and join a conversation after church on August 18 to learn about the designated minister process, how a designated minister differs from an Interim or Called Pastor and our timetable for this process. Council will also hold another session later in August for those who cannot attend on August 18.

September 8 Homecoming Sunday: Rev. Jean Alexander preaching

We look forward to reconvening after summer on September 8 at 10:30 for Homecoming Sunday. Please see the note from the Worship Commission on sending pictures from your summer to Nick McConnell by August 30 for a summer memories slide show. Also, think about reaching out to people and encouraging them to come and celebrate with us.

All-Church Retreat on October 27

Hold the date of Sunday, October 27 for an all-church retreat from 10:30 - 3:30. The theme is Celebrating the Past/Embracing the Future. We will start with a church worship service and continue with the retreat agenda. Lunch and child care will be provided. Stay tuned for details.

Visioning

Council has pulled together a visioning group to engage First Church in a process to shape a vision for our future. A questionnaire will be sent out in August. Your input is important. The retreat will incorporate the visioning process.

Homecoming Sunday is September 8

Homecoming Sunday is September 8. Worship Commission is planning a celebratory re-gathering. You can help! Please send 5-10 photos of your favorite summer moments to: nmccconnell@jackscamp.com. Do this by August 30; we want the whole summer to be included but need some time to put the pics together. We will have a slide show on the drop-down screen during worship reminding us why it's so much fun to go our separate ways, made even better knowing we will meet again at Homecoming!

Care of Parish Commission



Church Family Potluck on August 3

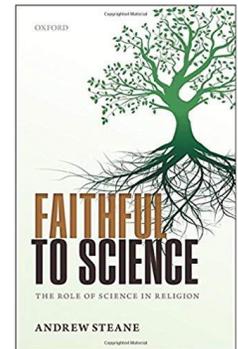
Mark your calendars! Susan and Doug Anderson will host a just-for-fun, family-friendly potluck at their home at 9815 Parkwood Drive, Bethesda, MD, from 4 to 7 PM on Saturday, August 3. Please RSVP to ssba92@gmail.com.

Faith Formation

Theology Reading Group: August 21 at 6:30 PM

The Theology Reading Group will next meet on Wednesday, August 21, at 6:30 in the Living Room. Something a little different this month, we will discuss a lecture available on You Tube by Andrew Steane, a Professor of Physics at Oxford on the relation between science and Christianity. Here is the lecture:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDcWSGNAd9E>. Andrew gave the talk, based on his book, *Faithful to Science: The Role of Science in Religion*, at his home church, so it is quite easy to follow. It last about one hour and raises interesting questions for discussion. Please check it out and join us.



Get on the Bus and Join This Summer's All Church Read! *The Energy Bus* by Jon Gordon

This book provides 10 Rules to fuel your life, work and team with positive energy! Council hopes all members and friends will join us in both reading and discussing this book over the summer. We will provide several opportunities in August to discuss the messages of the book and how they apply to our individual lives as well as our shared life as a congregation.

The book can be purchased new or used, print, e-book or audio on Amazon. There are also be several copies available to borrow in the church office.

Worship Commission

August: A Month of Dynamic Preaching and Worship Services

In August, we are privileged to have wonderful preachers from the midst of our faith community. Each Sunday, a member of our community will bring a message of hope, a word of healing, and a call to justice to help us on our journey with God, and to help us transform this world toward the kingdom of peace and shalom God calls it towards.

August 4 – Rev. Diana Gomez De Molina

Rev. Gomez De Molina is a UCC chaplain at the National Institute of Health.

August 11 – Rev. Laura Johnson and the Young Adults

Rev. Johnson is a UCC chaplain at the Washington Hospital Center. She has worked closely with the Young Adults to plan a beautiful and meaningful service.

August 18 – Rev. Karen Byrne

Rev. Byrne is ordained in the UCC, and provides meaningful support in the life of First Church, as well as serving as a parish in Maine for two weeks each summer.

August 25 – Dwight Davis

Mr. Davis is a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary. In addition to being a principal at a DC Public School, he is currently seeking ordination as a member in discernment with the UCC's Potomac Association.



Faith and Justice: Labor in the Pulpit September 1, 2019

For our fourth year, First Church is honoring Labor Day by drawing our attention to the importance of worker justice. This initiative, sponsored by Interfaith Worker Justice, calls us to reflect upon how faith communities can use our voices to help call forth better wages, working conditions, and benefits so workers can support themselves, their families, and their communities.

This year, we are so excited and honored to have Terry Flood and her colleagues from Jubilee Jobs share their important work in helping poor, disadvantaged, and unemployed individuals in the Washington, DC, area obtain the jobs they desperately need and in guiding them to move beyond poverty toward sustained self-sufficiency. Their work truly transforms lives.

We look forward to welcoming Terry and her colleagues from Jubilee Jobs, and we hope you can join us! Please email Rev. Sam McFerran with any questions at mcferran.sam@gmail.com



First Church Homecoming Potluck Dinner and Hymn Sing Saturday, September 7 Potluck at 6:00 PM followed by Hymn Sing at 7:30 PM

John Horman is planning a **First Church Hymn Sing** for the night of September 7. It will be preceded by a **Homecoming Potluck Dinner** and then move to the sanctuary immediately afterwards for fellowship and singing. The congregation has, for the most part, determined the content used in this hymn sing-along. Over the past few weeks, the congregation has been asked to complete a "ballot" asking for their favorite three hymns or spiritual songs. The results of this summer-long survey have been used to choose the hymns for our September event.

Let's begin now to generate interest and enthusiasm in this fall event. John's hope is to fill the sanctuary with heartily singing people... together sharing the gift of song in praise of God and God's people. The First Church congregation is a wonderful singing congregation. Start talking about this event and help us begin our fall worship season with a great musical event together.

Music for the Month

June 30, 2019

Anthem: "Open the Circle Wide" Mark Miller

Hymns: "Este es el dia" (This is the Day) NCH 65

"The Community of Christ" NCH 314

"America, the Beautiful" Glory to God

July 7, 2019

Anthem: "O How Beautiful" John Horman

Hymns: "Lord, You Give the Great Commission" Glory to God 298

"Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant" NCH 539

"Let Us Talents and Tongue Employ" NCH 347

July 14, 2019

Anthem: "Fill-a Me Up" Pepper Choplin

Hymns: "Great Is Your Faithfulness" NCH 423

"They Asked, 'Who Is My Neighbor?'" NCH 541

"Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love" NCH 498

July 21, 2019

Anthem: "Hush, Somebody's Callin' My Name"

Hymns: "When Morning Gilds the Sky" NCH 86

"Just a Closer Walk with Thee" Glory to God

"I, the Lord of Sea and Sky" Glory to God 69

July 28, 2019

Anthem: "Come to Me, O Weary Traveler" William Rowan

Hymns: "Now Thank We All Our God" New version with revised stanzas

"Sweet Hour of Prayer" NCH 505

"I Have decided to Follow Jesus" AAHH 400

August Second Sunday Offering: Strengthen the Church



**STRENGTHEN
THE CHURCH
OFFERING**

... God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young shall see visions, and your old shall dream dreams. ...

— Acts 2: 17 (NRSV)

The **Strengthen the Church** offering supports the expansion of ministry and growth of UCC local congregations. Your support of this offering will help the UCC fulfill its commitment to creating a just world for all by investing in new ministries and practices that meet the emerging needs of local communities.

In 2018, your support:

- ◆ Increased church vitality by awarding 12 grants totaling \$350,000 through the New and Renewing Spiritual Communities program.
- ◆ Ensured excellence in ministry through the completion of the Habakkuk group and the Manual on Ministry.
- ◆ Worked to alleviate poverty through the Adese Fellowship program for spiritual entrepreneurship.
- ◆ Strengthened your local church through the services provided by the UCC conference.

Please join us in planting the seeds needed to grow and sustain our denomination by making a gift to the Strengthen the Church offering.

NEW AND RENEWING SPIRITUAL COMMUNITIES

The New and Renewing Spiritual Communities grant strengthens UCC Congregations by providing funds to assist in community revitalization or support new churches. Grants are awarded each year to fund ministries that impact their communities towards a Just World for All.



Taos UCC in New Mexico provides a voice of faith and justice where partners in the work can journey together because of their faith. Launched in September of 2017, Taos UCC has quickly become a voice of Sanctuary and hope for all people. Their commitment to share the gospel teachings of Jesus, and live lives grounded in God and in prayer, has enabled them to become a faith community that helps our lives, our town, and our world be better.

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT LEADERSHIP

Strengthen the Church designates a portion of the offering to go towards Youth and Young Adult leadership development in the United Church of Christ. As we plan and ready ourselves for National Youth Event in 2020, Rev. Trayce Potter, Minister for Youth and Young Adult Engagement, is well underway in planning and connecting.

My main goal in working with youth is to create an effective program that provides leadership development, helps youth articulate their faith in a way that is relevant and authentic, and helps retain youth as they transition into ... young adulthood.

— Rev. Potter



POTTER

Coming up...

Live!

Check the Live! at 10th & G Facebook page for more information:
<https://www.facebook.com/liveat10thandg/>

at 10th & G

Check out a few highlights of the 2019/20 season:



New Orchestra of Washington is a one-of-a-kind ensemble. As a small chamber orchestra with flexible instrumentation, NOW elevates every member to his or her highest potential. NOW's programming is neither strictly classical nor purely academic. Each program is conceived to be attractive, inspirational and memorable. September 14, February 15, & May 30.



The Capital Hearings® have been entertaining audiences large and small since 2010. The group's wide-ranging repertoire of classical favorites, vocal jazz, and contemporary arrangements has established it as Washington, D.C.'s most versatile a cappella ensemble. September 28.
<http://www.thecapitalhearings.com/>



The Thomas Circle Singers is a chamber choral ensemble with a dual mission: to perform diverse choral works for the enjoyment of audiences in the Washington, D.C. area and to raise awareness and funds for organizations that address the pressing needs of the city's underserved citizens. October 19. <https://www.thomascirclesingers.org/>



Washington Bach Consort presents *The Chamber Series* — concerts of smaller-scale works in intimate and welcoming spaces perfectly matched to the repertoire. November 8, December 6, February 28, & April 3. <https://bachconsort.org/chamber-series/>

13 THE THIRTEEN

The Thirteen *Through the Looking-Glass*, a continuation of their commitment to life-affirming performances, music-making at its finest, and their determination that the music must be relevant to the society in which we live. November 16, December 21, March 7, & May 2. <https://www.thethirteenchoir.org/concerts>

August Calendar

Saturday, August 3

4:00 pm Potluck Dinner at Andersons'

Sunday, August 4

9:15 am Bible Workbench
10:15 am Child Care provided, *Ed. Suite*
10:30 am Sunday School, *Ed. Suite*
10:30 am Morning Worship, *Sanctuary*
Rev. Diana Gomez de Molina
preaching
11:30 am Coffee & Fellowship, *Narthex*
12:00 pm Finance Comm., *Living Room*

Monday, August 5

6:00 pm Downtown Drop-In Center
for Homeless Youth
6:30 pm Sanctuary Task Force, *Comm. Hall*

Tuesday, August 6

6:30 pm Church Council, *Comm. Hall*

Wednesday, August 7

12:15 pm Break Away Meditation, *Chapel*

Sunday, August 11

9:15 am Bible Workbench
10:15 am Child Care provided, *Ed. Suite*
10:30 am Sunday School, *Ed. Suite*
10:30 am Morning Worship, *Sanctuary*
Rev. Laura Johnson and Young
Adult Group leading worship
11:30 am Coffee & Fellowship, *Narthex*
12:00 pm Care of Parish Comm.,
Living Room

Monday, August 12

6:00 pm Downtown Drop-In Center
for Homeless Youth

Wednesday, August 14

12:15 pm Break Away Meditation, *Chapel*

Sunday, August 18

9:15 am Bible Workbench
10:15 am Child Care provided, *Ed. Suite*
10:30 am Sunday School, *Ed. Suite*
10:30 am Morning Worship, *Sanctuary*
Rev. Karen Byrne preaching
11:30 am Coffee & Fellowship, *Narthex*
12:00 pm Adult Nurture, *Comm. Hall*

Monday, August 19

6:00 pm Downtown Drop-In Center
for Homeless Youth

Wednesday, August 21

12:15 pm Break Away Meditation, *Chapel*
6:30 pm Theology Reading Group,
Living Room

Thursday, August 22

6:30 pm Facilities Comm., *Chapel*

Sunday, August 25

9:15 am Bible Workbench
10:15 am Child Care provided, *Ed. Suite*
10:30 am Sunday School, *Ed. Suite*
10:30 am Morning Worship, *Sanctuary*
Dwight Davis preaching
11:30 am Coffee & Fellowship, *Narthex*

Monday, August 26

6:00 pm Downtown Drop-In Center
for Homeless Youth

Wednesday, August 28

12:15 pm Break Away Meditation, *Chapel*



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Ministers – Friends & Members of the Church
Associate Minister – Rev. Sam McFerran
Director of Music – Mr. John Horman
Building Manager – Mr. Byron Adams
Administrative Assistant – Ms. Cindy Dobbs
Members in Discernment – Dwight Davis, Lynaya Morris
Nursery & Childcare Staff – Luis Murillo, Timur Murillo, Ziyah Holman, Mia Young

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