



LIGHT FROM THE TOWER

August 2014

The mission of historic First Church is to bring diverse people of metropolitan Buffalo together to follow Jesus Christ through worshiping God, fostering spiritual growth and serving the community.

**EPISTLE FROM PHIL
TO ALL THE SAINTS AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BUFFALO**

Impossible!!! It can't already be August! Yup— the old calendar on the wall says that the summer is moving right along and that you will read this in August. Where did April go? Or May? Time flies when you're having fun I guess. Does it take fun to make time fly?

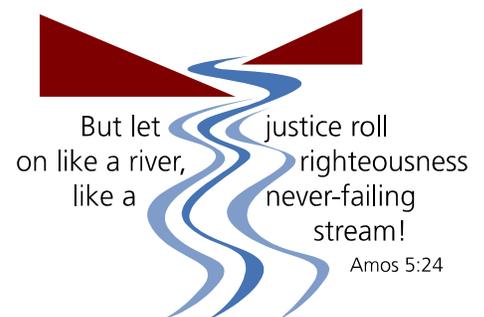
Well, enough of that. As we begin August of 2014 I have one question: What manner of man (or woman) is a prophet? The prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures were all first and foremost people of faith. They believed in God and in the promises. Second, they were attuned to God's rhythms and mysteries. They knew what God wanted them to do, to say, and when they should get out there with God's message. Third, they weren't averse to ruffling a few feathers. All of them believed that religion and politics should mix and that your religious faith should guide your political decisions. More than one of the prophets got into real hot water for telling a power broker the truth and telling the king that his nation had lost its greatness in God's eyes. Fourth, prophets never lose hope. Even as Israel faces the doom of an exile in a foreign land the prophet comes with hope that if the nation will return to God then God will return to the nation with blessings and new hope.

One of the great tragedies of the Christian church during the last half century or so has been that we have lost our feel for and understanding of the prophets. On the one hand many church members don't want to hear the prophets because they always get political in their messages. On the other, there are many Christians who chase after the words of the prophets only to abuse them in by putting together wrong-headed and wrong-hearted ideas about the immanent end of the creation. Let's leave both sides in the dust and try carefully, and prayerfully, to understand the prophets by spending a little time with just one prophet.

During the first four weeks of August we are going to think about the message of one of Israel's early prophets— Amos! Amos didn't start out studying for the prophetic office. He didn't go to seminary or study ministry at college. No, he simple felt God's call and marched out to speak what God had put in his head to say. What manner of person (male or female) is a prophet? S/he is a person whom God has commissioned to speak God's Word so that others may hear, and repent, and believe. Join us in either our 8:30 or 11:15 a.m. worship services as we listen for God's Word to us in the words of the prophet Amos.

May your summer be a blessed time for you and yours!

Phil





A Summer of Adult Christian Education

Unlike so many other churches we at First Presbyterian don't just cancel Sunday school during the summer. In some ways we really work to make the summer program even better than much of the rest of the year. The Summer of 2014 will be no exception! This year we have a special twist for the month of August. We are going to have adults from our congregation lead the program themselves, with only modest help from Rev. Phil Gittings as we enjoy a series called:

"My Christian Faith Beyond the Church Walls!"

Each week at 9:30 a.m. we will have one of our members share the ways that his or her faith impact the work that they do in their jobs or in some other area of life such as special volunteer organizations. One person a week will lead the discussion and we will get a chance to know how God's grace operates in her or his business, professional, or volunteer life outside of the church walls.

The line-up for the Adult Sunday School this summer is:

August 3 — Stephanie Smith

August 10 — Rebecca Laubenstein

August 17 — Ian Bradford

August 24 — John Darby

August Worship Schedule

During the month of August we will worship God with a focus on Amos, the Shepherd from Tekoa. Amos brought a message of God's disapproval of Israel's actions toward the needy and the outcast, as well as a warning that they were turning away from God by worshiping other Gods. Yet through it all, Amos assures the faithful that God is with them. During the first four Sundays in August we will focus on the message of this incredible prophet of God. Each week we'll hear a different part of his Word to us.

August 3 — Chosen to do Justice: Amos 3:1-15

August 10 — Seek the Lord and Live: Amos 5:1-17

August 17 — Let Justice Roll: Amos 5:18-27

August 24 — The Lord Will Restore: Amos 9:11-15

Make a special effort to join us in either the 8:30 AM Early Bird Service or our 11:15 AM service to hear the messages from almost 28 centuries ago that is as up to date today as the latest Apple product!



Ice Cream Social

Sunday, August 10
after the 11:15 AM service

Join the
Christian Education Committee
for an
old fashioned Ice Cream Social!

Bring a friend!



In the 7th inning stretch of summer...

First Church goes to Coca-Cola Field! Join your church family for an afternoon Bisons game!

Church Life is organizing a group outing after services on **Sunday, August 24th**. The game starts at 1:05 PM; ticket cost will be \$10/ per person, and everyone will be on their own for concession purchases.

Please sign up with Stephanie Smith (smithstephanie@gmail.com / 531-3450).

Allentown Yard Sale

First Church will participate in a community yard sale on **Saturday, August 23** from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM. Many homes in Allentown will also hold yard sales this day.

We will be selling items already in our possession that we no longer need. Volunteers are needed to help set up, clean up, and run the sale. Please sign up in the Narthex. Thank you!

**We are not asking for donations of items to sell.
The church has plenty already!*



Clerk's Corner

At its regular meeting on July 16, 2014, the following actions were taken by Session.

- Reviewed the benchmarks from the 2013 Annual Meeting at the August meeting of Session.
- Elected Janet Hill, Clerk of Session.



News in the Family & Community

Thank you Volunteers!



On one Wednesday last month ten First Church volunteers served 266 dinners at Friends of Night People. Thank you so much MacIntosh Barker, Mary Field, Samantha Gaerte, Don Houck, Susan Koeppel, Ingrid Meyer, Shannon Rogers, Jacob Santos, Katherine Woodard, and Roger Woodard!



The 20th Annual Garden Walk was a great success on Symphony Circle. First Church, One Symphony Circle, Inc., and Kleinhans partnered to offer a food truck rodeo, church tours, picnicking on Symphony Circle, and much more. A fabulous time was had by all.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this event possible, especially Karen Lewis, Janet Hill, Lauren Hill, José Gomez, Meg Doerzbacher, Ralph Doerzbacher, Maria Oakley, Nancy Barry, Jacob Santos, Liz Kolken, Mark Armesto, Olga Rico-Armesto, Mark Juan Armesto, Ryan Nadbrzuch, Stephanie Smith, and Krista Palgutt.



The Old Library on the second floor will soon be a useable space for Sunday school, committee work, and more. Thank you to everyone who helped declutter and straighten up, including Meg Doerzbacher, Olga Rico-Armesto, Janet Hill, Jean Hess, and Liz Kamke!



VIVE, Inc., a refugee organization whom First Church has had a relationship with for years, is in great need of monetary donations for operations. First Church has donated \$1,000, and Women's Association donated \$500 as well.

If you would like to make an individual donation, checks can be mailed to VIVE, 50 Wyoming Ave., Buffalo, NY 14215. To learn more about VIVE, speak to Parish Associate Rev. John Long, or visit www.viveinc.org.



National Night Out Picnic

Tuesday, August 5

The Allentown Association & the Kleinhans Community Association will host a potluck picnic at 6:30 PM on the lawn in front of Kleinhans Music Hall. We will provide hot dogs, sausage, chips, water, plates, forks, and napkins. Please bring a salad, dessert, or other dish to pass if you are able. Invited guests are: Community Police Officers, Chief Patterson, Mayor Brown, Council Members Franczyk, Rivera, & Pridgen. Please come and meet your neighbors and find ways to get more involved in your community. Bring chairs.



Our deepest sympathies go out the family of Evelyn Akiwumi who passed away on July 26th. A funeral was held at First Church on July 31st. Our prayers are with Evelyn's loved ones.



Christian Education Good News

What a beautiful summer we are enjoying here in Buffalo! And it has been a busy and beautiful summer here at the church, too.

Summer Sunday school is so much fun! We have been meeting on the front porch of the church when the weather permits. We are making a paper chain to represent each child who comes each Sunday, and each week it grows longer! In addition to everything else the children learn in Sunday School, we have been learning new songs that we plan to share with the congregation in August.

With summer comes the new program year for the church, and the Christian Education committee is looking for new members! If you are interested in Christian Education in any way, you are welcome to attend our next committee meeting on Tuesday, August 12th. Please contact me by calling the church at 884-7250, ext. 16 to receive details about the time and location. I can also be reached by email at Meg@firstchurchbuffalo.org.

The Christian Education committee is also making plans for the new academic year, kicking off on September 7th with New Life Sunday. This year we will continue to have a single multi-age classroom using the *Feasting on the Word* curriculum. This curriculum follows the worship schedule so that children and adults are hearing the same passages from the Bible on Sunday mornings.

Finally, don't forget our Ice Cream Social on Sunday August 10th immediately after the 11:15 a.m. worship service. That will be a great Sunday to bring a friend to church!

Peace and Blessings, Meg Doerzbacher

Church Life News

By Virginia McIntyre

On **August 3rd** there will be another Jazz Vesper Service and potluck dinner beginning at 5:30 PM in the Chapel. If the weather holds we will have the service outside in the courtyard. There are many activities for fellowship with each other going on in our faith community. I challenge everyone to stretch their boundaries and attend one or maybe a few... it seems too often I hear..."that is not my thing" when invited to an activity at First. Well, it may not be your thing...but one thing is for sure...if you stay home you are missing out in meeting some very interesting people and perhaps some personal growth. Also, we on the Church Life Committee are curious as to what your "thing" may be. Stop by a meeting and let us know!

On **September 7th** a group of us are hoping to open the Welcome back Picnic to the Community. We need help! There will be a meeting **August 4th** at 7:30 PM at the church. Please attend if you would like to work on this endeavor. Church Life was asked to do this, but we decided at our last meeting that for this event to happen: help is necessary.

On **November 2nd** at 2:30 PM Church Life is planning a trip to Kleinhans for 20 of us from First Church. Lunch will be served in the Chapel, then across the street we will go to partake in a joint performance of the BPO, Irish Classical Theater and dancers. At the next Church Life meeting the committee will decide what to charge for these first rate seats and a meal. Do not fret as we will be underwriting a significant portion of the cost as the goal of our committee is to provide and encourage fellowship activities among our diverse congregation! Please understand that the seats will be sold on a first come first served basis. So reserve your seat quickly.

Also, **Saturday, November 1st** is the date of the next *Raisin' the Roof to Praise Our Lord* Gospel Music festival. We hope to begin the festivities at 6:00 PM. Thus far we have a commitment from the Men in White Choir, and Reverend Hamid Motley and the House of Mercy Praise Team. Moreover, I cannot get over the many new faces I see in worship every Sunday! We need more members in worship to not only participate in corporate worship but to also talk to the many visitors and tell them of all the great things that happen here at First. People are walking in our doors!

Teaching in the Church

September 23, 30, October 7, 14, 21, 28, 2014
Tuesdays, 6:30-9:30 PM

North Presbyterian Church
300 North Forest Rd., Williamsville, NY 14221



Course Description

This 20 hour class will begin with the questions "What is Christian education? And why is our concept of Christian education such a basic building block for ministry?" As we explore the answers to these questions we will also study the various ways and methods to teach in the church. It has been said that effective Christian education has the potential to deepen faith, commitment and loyalty. Everything we do and say in the church is education for infants to seniors. Its revitalization must therefore move to center stage in our ministries.

By the end of this class, participants will have an understanding of the foundational pieces of Christian education as well as how to build an educational ministry appropriate to the needs and concerns of their own faith community.

The recommended text is Basics of Christian Education by Karen B. Tye, Chalice Press.

Leader, Debbie Katz has a MA in Christian Education from Union Presbyterian Seminary. She is Director of Christian Education at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Buffalo, NY

This course will be beneficial to

- *teachers, pastors, youth ministry leaders, Christian Education Chairs and Directors, Session and board members and adult education leaders*
- *people who help others grow and learn and/or who enjoy the conversations of dedicated colleagues in ministry*
- *people interested in becoming Commissioned Lay Pastors*



Fee: \$85

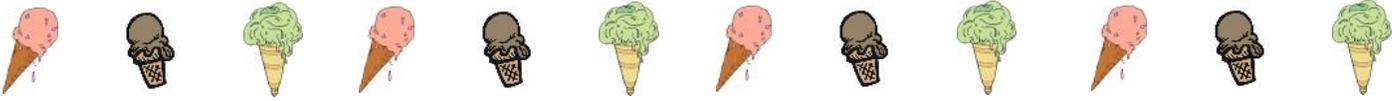
Sponsored by the Center for Christian Growth of WNY (*Presbytery of WNY, Western Area Churches in Covenant-United Church of Christ, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*)

Presbyterian scholarships are available from Discipleship and Nurture Team, Presbytery of WNY, (pbywny.org documents)

Registration

Please register by Friday, September 19.

Send name, address, phone number, email and church name plus check of \$85 payable to Center for Christian Growth of WNY Resource Center, 300 North Forest Road, Williamsville, NY 14221 Phone 631-0979 mornings, or email mmohlke@gmail.com



August First Church Calendar Highlights

Summer Sunday Morning Schedule

8:30 AM Early Bird Service (through 8/24)
 9:30 AM Adult Christian Education*
 11:15 AM Worship
 11:30 AM Summer Sunday School
 12:15 PM Fellowship Time

Communion is served the first Sunday of the month.
 There is no Sunday school on Communion Sundays.

** There will be no Adult Christian Ed. class on 8/31*

Church Programs/Events

Sun. 8/3	5:30 PM	Jazz Vesper Potluck
Sun. 8/3	7:00 PM	Jazz Vesper Service
Sun. 8/10	12:15 PM	Ice Cream Social
Tues. 8/19	7:00 PM	Couchside Calvin
Sat. 8/23	9:30 AM	Allentown Yard Sale
Sun. 8/24	1:05 PM	Bisons Game
Mon. 8/25		September Newsletter Deadline

Building Use

Thursdays	3-7 PM	Native Offerings Crop Share Pickup
Fri. 8/15		Nonmember wedding Rehearsal
Sat. 8/16		Nonmember wedding

Weekly Events

Tuesdays

10:30 AM Staff Meeting
 12:30 PM Food Bag Distribution

Wednesdays

1:00 PM Bible Study

Committee Meetings

Mon. 8/7	7:30 PM	Church Life
Tues. 8/5	5:30 PM	Worship & Music
Tues. 8/5	7:00 PM	Lands & Buildings
Wed. 8/6	6:00 PM	P&A
Tues. 8/12	5:30 PM	Christian Education
Wed. 8/13	5:45 PM	Trustees
Thurs. 8/14	7:00 PM	CMO
Wed. 8/20	7:00 PM	Session

Save the Date!

Sun. 9/7	New Life Sunday & Sunday School registration for new program year.
Sat. 11/1	Gospel Music Fest
Sun. 11/2	First Church goes to Kleinhans

Sunday Morning Nursery Care

First Church offers nursery services for infants and children up through age four. The nursery is located on the second floor of Allen Hall and is available from 9:30 AM until the end of regular worship on Sunday mornings. Our paid nursery workers are safe and reliable and love children! Please feel free to use this service on Sunday mornings!

Community Events

Tues. 8/5	6:30 PM	National Night Out Picnic
Sat. 8/23	9:30 AM	Allentown Yard Sale



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

One Symphony Circle, Buffalo, NY 14201-1213
(Across from Kleinhans)

Phone: (716) 884-7250 Fax: (716) 884-7253
www.firstchurchbuffalo.org
email@firstchurchbuffalo.org

Twitter: @1stChurchBflo

"Like" us on Facebook:

"First Presbyterian Church of Buffalo, NY"

FIRST CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Dr. Philip S. Gittings, *Interim Pastor*

RevPhil@firstchurchbuffalo.org

Voicemail extension: 13

The Reverend John Long, D.D.

Parish Associate for Community Outreach

JohnRLong17@verizon.net

The Reverend Jack Smiley, *Pastor Emeritus*

Dr. David Bond, *Organist/Choirmaster, Bookkeeper*

DBond@firstchurchbuffalo.org

Voicemail extension: 17

Christina Banas, *Business Manager*

CBanas@firstchurchbuffalo.org

Voicemail extension: 11

Meg Doerzbacher, *Christian Education Director*

Meg@firstchurchbuffalo.org

Voicemail extension: 16

Quinton Meyer, *Volunteer Assoc for Pastoral Visitation*

Meyer405@aol.com

Liz Kamke, *Outreach Assistant*

EKSK476@gmail.com

Tom Hollfelder, *Custodian/Security Guard*

Church Office, extension 10

Weddings, extension 15

weddings@firstchurchbuffalo.org

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OFFICERS

SESSION AND TRUSTEES BY CLASS AND TERM

Clerk of Session

Janet Hill

Class of 2015

Jean Hess (2)

Tim Hess (1)

Janet Hill (T) (2)

Don Houck (T) (2)

Susan Koeppl (1)

Virginia McIntyre (1)

Class of 2016

Ian Bradford (T) (2)

Mike Henry (T) (2)

Stephanie Smith (1)

Ryan Nadbrzuch (T) (1)

Maria Oakley (1)

Class of 2017

Mark Armesto (T) (2)

Lucas Lloyd (1)

Henry Porter (T) (1)

Sue Snyder (1)

Roger Woodard (1)

BOARD OF DEACONS BY CLASS AND TERM

Class of 2015

Liz Kamke (1)

Tina Osei (1)

Judith Paradzai (2)

Phil Sims (2)

Denis Wettlaufer (2)

Class of 2016

Jackie Addo (1)

Cleo Alexander (2)

Mark Juan Armesto (2)

José Gomez (2)

Gifty Koramoah (1)

Ken Madell (2)

Class of 2017

Pat Brown (2)

Rebecca Laubenstein (1)

Madeline Mason (1)

Lovelace Quarshie (1)

Olga Rico-Armesto (2)

Nolan Whipple (1)

(T) indicates that the Elder has also
been elected to serve as a Trustee.

**To reach Rev. Dr. Philip S. Gittings,
Interim Pastor,
call 884-7250, ext. 13 (Office)
548-0466 (Cell)**

**To reach Quinton Meyer,
Volunteer Associate for Pastoral
Visitation
909-2259 (Cell)**

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY	Closed
TUESDAY	9 AM to 3 PM
WEDNESDAY	9 AM to 12 PM
THURSDAY	9 AM to 3 PM
FRIDAY	9 AM to 12 PM