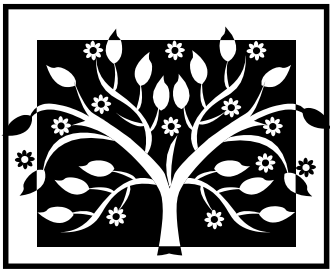




LIGHT FROM THE TOWER

January 2016

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.



New Members' Class

Do you know someone God might be calling to join our congregation?

Are you a member of First Presbyterian Church who knows someone who is looking for a faith community that will give him/her opportunities for mission and ministry?

OR

Have you been attending our congregation as a visitor and now feel the call to share with us in mission and ministry?

God often calls people to join a congregation so that they can be part of a group engaged in the ministry of the Gospel. Joining the church is a commitment to God as well as to the other members of the congregation. We have been very blessed with our new members these last few years, and now we are forming another group of people who wish to explore God's call to membership. There is no obligation to join if you come to the classes. These meetings are opportunities for people to explore our church and get to know us better.

On three consecutive Sundays, January 10, 17 and 24 this group will meet after church at 12:15 p.m. in the pastor's office. We'll share light lunch as we talk about our church's beliefs, history, ministry and future. Members of the boards will join us to talk about their experiences, and at the third meeting the Session will come to meet everyone. If you do decide to join then we will receive you during the worship service on January 31.

If you think God may be calling you to share our ministry, please let us know and come to these meetings. You can call Phil at the church office and leave a message that you'll be coming. We hope to see you there!

**The Spirit moves people in many ways.
Look, listen, feel...is the Spirit moving you...?**



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

I write this epistle to you just before Christmas, so while I sit at my writing table your homes are full of all the lovely things you are doing to get ready for Christmas. The smells of baking or cooking may well be wafting into your nostrils and perhaps you are listening to your favorite Christmas music while I write, trying to say something about the upcoming New Year and the spiritual opportunities you might find if you start the New Year right.

2016 will be a very eventful year for First Presbyterian Church! First of all, you will elect a Pastoral Nominating Committee sometime during the year. The time has come for us to move on from an interim pastorate and to call an installed pastor who will lead you faithfully to the future. Secondly, we will begin the year with a class for people wanting to explore the possibility of becoming members of church. We need to find those people whom God is calling to share in our ministry and I hope this class will mark the beginning of a concerted effort that we will all join in to help our church reach out to new people.

The New Year will bring special celebrations! Even though January is thought to be a slow month around the church this year January will bring several delightful opportunities to worship God and focus on our spiritual journeys together. Quinton Meyer will share the message on the Sunday closest to Epiphany. We will take time on the Sunday when we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord to share stories of baptism that have been meaningful to us,

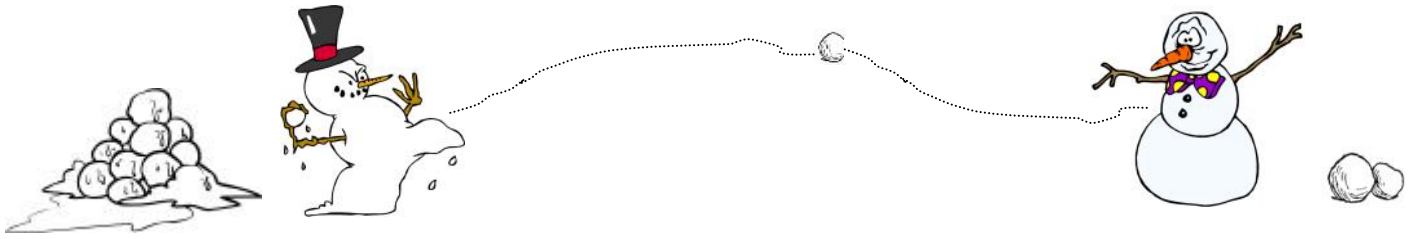
Most important of all, 2016 will be the year that God calls us forward. There is still much to do, and God has some new things in mind for us as the year progresses. I hope and pray that 2016 will be the year that all of us pray together, pull together, and share the glorious new life as citizens in the kingdom of God.

So my beloved friends in Christ-Happy New Year! Let's go!

May God bless us all!

Phil Gittings, Interim Pastor

New Year's Message
FROM THE PASTOR



Young Adult Gathering

Friday, January 22 at 6:30 PM

at Christina & Chuck Banas' place
(176 College St.)

A winter themed party with chili,
a mission activity, and maybe a movie!

Jazz Vespers

Sunday, February 7 @ 7 PM

Potluck meal at 6 PM in the Chapel

Poetry & Jazz music combine to create a
unique worship experience.



January Adult Christian Education

Sundays at 9:30 AM in the Pastor's Study
Wednesdays at 12:30 PM in the Pastor's Study

Our Adult Education program will continue in the New Year to offer unique opportunities to study our faith through study of the Bible and other resources. In January we will offer two groups per week to all who wish to spend time learning about their faith.

Sunday Morning: At 9:30 a.m. each Sunday our adults gather for lively discussion and sharing in the pastor's study. This group will be studying II Corinthians during January. Paul's second letter to the Corinthian church is unique in the scope of problems it discusses and the solutions that it provides. Come join us for the study of this amazing letter. *(Note: This group re-convenes on January 10 after two weeks off!)*

Wednesday Afternoon: What is John's gospel really like? How does this gospel differ from the three others in our Bible and does that make any difference to us today? These and many other timely questions come up all the time in our Wednesday afternoon Bible study. Join this amazing group for more discussions on John through the month of January. *(Note: This group meets again on January 13 after the Holiday break!)*

CELEBRATE THE NEW YEAR IN WORSHIP!

January 2016 will bring some unique worship opportunities to us. While January is often called "Ordinary Time" on the Christian calendar there is seldom much that is ordinary about it. Here's what's happening:

January 10-The Baptism of the Lord: On the second Sunday of the New Year we celebrate the baptism of our Lord and ponder the meaning of our own baptism. The rite of Baptism, one of our two sacraments, is seldom given the consideration it deserves. On January 10 we hope to change that as we pay attention to Jesus' baptism, and our own.

January 17: We will emphasize our Spiritual Gifts as we hear from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Each of us will have the opportunity to ponder the gifts God has given to us and to think about how we might use our gifts to the fullest advantage in the New Year. This service will be highlighted by a Hymn Sing where we can pick our favorite hymns for all to enjoy!

January 24: "You are the Body of Christ and Individually Members of it.!" On January 24 we will re-visit the old Biblical theme of the Body of Christ. We'll ask how each of us is part of that body and how we can help grow a healthy body as we move into God's future.

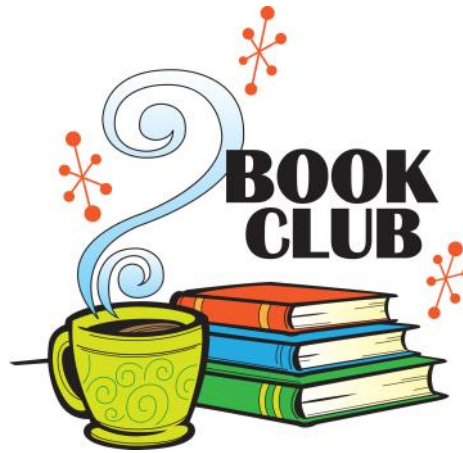
January 31: Closing out the month of January we will hear about the results of one of Jesus' earliest sermons. Sometimes a good sermon will get you into trouble as Jesus found out, and you will learn when you come to worship on the 31st.



**Firm Deadline:
Tuesday, January 19**

Committee chairs, program leaders, and staff— it's that time of year again.

Please submit your 2015 Annual Report via email to Christina at cbanas@firstchurchbuffalo.org



The Women's Book Club will gather next on **Thursday, January 28** at 6:00 PM at the home of JoAnn Doerr. The novel to be discussed is City of Women by David R. Gilham. Potluck supper— please bring a dish to share!

Clerk's Corner

Session took the following actions at its regular meeting on December 16, 2015.

- ✓ Approved the request to welcome Buffalo Mass Mob to join our worship service in October 2016, in conjunction with One Symphony Circle and its efforts to preserve the building.
- ✓ Asked Rev. John Long to look further into developing a partnership with a mosque and to see who in the congregation might be interested in joining the discussion.
- ✓ Approved the Mission Study with the caveat that Elder Mark Armesto be asked to add sentences on how the process was prayerfully done.
- ✓ Authorized Rev. Dr. Gittings to proceed with new members classes in January,
- ✓ Authorized David Bond to seek bids fro snowplowing contractors and to sign the best bid.
- ✓ Agreed to collect a special offering at the Christmas Eve service to benefit the food ministries of First Church.
- ✓ Authorized Elders John Darby and Andrew Gaerte to send comments to the IRS stating the opposition of the Session of First Church to the proposal to obtain Social Security Numbers



First Church Calendar Highlights

Sunday Schedule

9:30 AM	Adult Christian Education
11:00 AM	Worship
11:15 AM	Sunday School*
12:00 PM	Fellowship Time

Communion is served the first Sunday of each month.

**Sunday school does not gather on Communion Sundays.*

Church Programs/Events

Sun. 1/10	12:00 PM	Removal of the Greens
Sun. 1/10	12:15 PM	New Member Class
Sun. 1/17	12:15 PM	New Member Class
Sun. 1/24	12:15 PM	New Member Class
Fri. 1/22	6:30 PM	Young Adults Party
Thurs. 1/28	6:00 PM	Women's Book Club
Sun. 2/7	6:00 PM	Jazz Vespers Potluck
Sun. 2/7	7:00 PM	Jazz Vespers

Weekly Events

Tuesdays

10:30 AM	Staff Meeting
12:30 PM	Food Bag Distribution
4:30 PM	Literacy Tutoring

Wednesdays

12:30 PM	Bible Study*
4:30 PM	Literacy Tutoring

**No Bible Study January 6*

Board & Committee Meetings

Tues. 1/12	5:30 PM	Worship & Music
Tues. 1/12	7:00 PM	Christian Ed.
Wed. 1/13	5:00 PM	Investments
Wed. 1/13	5:45 PM	Trustees
Tues. 1/19	6:00 PM	One Symphony Cir
Wed. 1/20	7:00 PM	Session
Wed. 1/27	6:00 PM	P&A

Building Use

Tuesdays	11 AM	Houghton Service In Chapel
Thursdays	3-7 PM	Native Offerings Crop Share Pickup

Helping Hands Needed!

We will be removing the holiday decorations from the sanctuary after services on January 10. Won't you join us to help put things away safely and neatly for next year? Pizza and drinks will be provided. Thanks so much and see you then!

Food Pantry Sundays

The first Sunday of the month is designated "Food Pantry Sunday." Donations of canned goods can be placed on the chancel stairs. Monetary donations to the Lyon Food Pantry are also appreciated. First Church feeds an average of 20 hungry people every Tuesday, right here in our neighborhood. This is an opportunity for hands-on mission that helps many. Thank you!

We want to hear from you!

Have you enjoyed our new Liturgy of Sharing? Is there something on your heart to share during this brief 1-2 minute timeslot in the service? Talk to Rev. Phil or Stephanie Smith to sign up and share at an upcoming Sunday!

Deacon Prayer List

We want to know if you are sick, have a joy to share, or need a prayer. To add a prayer to the list, please contact a Deacon or the Church Office by Noon on Thursday of each week. Your prayer needs may remain anonymous if you wish.

First Presbyterian Church
One Symphony Circle Buffalo, New York 14201

Contact Information Form

The Deacons request that each member and friend of First Church please fill out this form to help our ministry. Our goal is 100% participation, so please fill this form out completely and return it to the Church Office. Thank you!

Title (Mr., Mrs., Dr., etc.): _____ First Name: _____

Middle Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Suffix (Jr., Sr., etc.): _____ Preferred Name: _____

Birth Date: _____ Maiden Name (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP Code: _____

Home Phone Number: _____ Cell Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____@_____

Spouse/Partner: _____

Anniversary: _____ Spouse/Partner Birth date: _____

Children Living at Home —Name: _____ Gender: _____ Birth Date: _____

Name: _____ Gender: _____ Birth Date: _____

Name: _____ Gender: _____ Birth Date: _____

Spouse/Partner Cell Phone Number: _____

Spouse/Partner Email Address: _____@_____

Other family member Cell Phone Number: _____

Other family member Email Address: _____@_____

Other family member Cell Phone Number: _____

Other family member Email Address: _____@_____

Preferred phone number for church directory: _____

May we publish your email address in the church directory? Yes ___ No ___

Newsletter delivery preference: Email ___ Mail ___ Church mailbox ___

Are you a Facebook user? Yes___ No ___

(If yes, we invite you to “like” the church at “First Presbyterian Church of Buffalo, NY.)

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”

Additional parking is available in the Gateway-Longview lot on Wadsworth Street Sunday mornings from 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM, courtesy of Carl Paladino.

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

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 2016

Ian Bradford (T) (2)
Andrew Gaerte (T) (1)
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)

Class of 2018

John Darby (T) (1)
Tim Hess (2)
Lauren Hill (T) (1)
Susan Koeppel (2)
Virginia McIntyre (2)

BOARD OF DEACONS BY CLASS AND TERM

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 Whipple (1)
Madeline Mason (1)
Lovelace Quarshie (1)
Olga Rico-Armesto (2)
Nolan Whipple (1)*

Class of 2018

Christina Banas (1)*
Mary Field (1)
Liz Kamke (2)
Sheila Miller (1)
Tina Osei (2)

*Indicates Co-Moderator

(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)**

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY	Closed
TUESDAY	9 AM to 4 PM
WEDNESDAY	9 AM to 4 PM
THURSDAY	9 AM to 4 PM
FRIDAY	9 AM to 4 PM

