



Light from the Tower

THE NEWSLETTER OF

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
BUFFALO, NEW YORK

“A COMMUNITY WITH CHRIST AT THE CENTER.”

ESTABLISHED 1812

July 2011

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

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

What comes into your mind when someone mentions going on a journey? For some the idea of a journey may mean physically going out to visit the grandparents or to see a new city. For others the first thing that comes to mind is getting on a plane for a business trip. Still others think of our internal journeys, the times we grow in attitude or mind set.

This summer we are talking about journeys in worship and in Sunday school. The Bible has many stories of people who go on journeys when God calls them to go. On June 26 we began with Abraham and Sarah, the founding father and mother of our faith. The rest of the summer will focus on other journeyers like Moses, Joshua, Jesus, or Paul. On Sunday August 21 we'll even think of the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem as we celebrate “Christmas in August” with our favorite Christmas hymns.

As we worship together this summer I hope you'll ponder the journeys that God has sent you on in your life. Of course, some of us will take journeys as we go on vacation or run away for a weekend to see family. But perhaps more important, each one of us is on some sort of journey as we grow in our faith or deal with some issue that we are faced with and can't avoid.

God sends people on journeys! But just as important, God sends people out to journey together. The Israelites journeyed together as Moses led them out of Egypt. The disciples journeyed together with Jesus for three years, and God sent Peter, Paul, and the rest of the new Christians on many journeys to make disciples all over the known world.

We are on a faith journey together here at First Presbyterian Church as we seek God's will for our future ministry together. As with many other people who journey together we may have to make hard decisions along the way. Faith journeys such as ours are seldom easy or smooth. Sometimes we take wrong turns and have to backtrack. At others we may need to stop and rest a while, but not know quite where or how to stop.

This summer I am hoping and praying that you will ponder your individual journey as well as the journey God is calling you to take together. Interim Pastorates are often times when journeys are begun or directions are changed. Together, if we are faithful, I am convinced that God will show us the way.

As we journey together, maybe we should remember the old proverb, “The journey is better than the inn.” It may not always be easy, but in the final analysis, for the people of God the journey is our home. And God is always journeying with us.

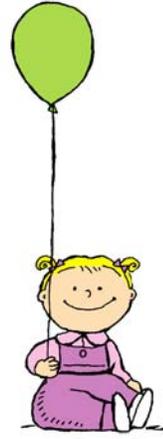
May this summer be a blessed time-for you,

Phil

OFFICER TRAINING

Tuesday, July 19th
7:00 PM
in the Pastor's Study

Elder and Deacon training is being offered for new officers, sitting officers, or anyone interested in learning more about these important positions in our church governance. Please RSVP to the Church Office at 884-7250, ext. 10.



Child
Care
Available

This year the nursery will be open all summer long, and will be staffed by 2 adults. Children ages 0-3 years are welcome. Older children will have the opportunity to attend Sunday School in the CE Wing on non-Communion Sundays.

SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

This summer we will be studying journeys in a variety of ways as our children also study many of the same passages in their Sunday school classes. Additionally we will vary our worship experiences and styles every so often to see how God might be leading us in worship together. For example, the first summer worship began with a hymn sing that allowed many of us to pick our favorite hymns at the beginning of the service. We'll do that at least two more times this summer. We will also change some other things to help us all worship God more deeply and faithfully. Here's the line up for the July:

July 3-Romans 7:15-25a: Paul was on many journeys. His last one was to Rome, but before going there he wrote to them. This week we'll ponder Paul's thinking about why he does some of the things he does not want to do as we ponder God's word for our lives on the weekend of Independence Day. We will also celebrate communion together.

July 10-Exodus 12:29-39: It took Moses and the Israelites some time to actually get going from Egypt on their journey to the Promised Land. This week we'll study the strategy God used to get them going and to push Pharaoh to fulfill God's command to "let my people go."

July 17-Exodus 13:21-22, 16:13-18, 17:1-17: While on their journey the Israelites experienced many acts of God in their midst. This week we'll look at three special moment that they experienced along the way.



July 24-Joshua 1:1-9: When Moses died the leadership of the journey into the Promised Land fell to Joshua. We'll listen for God's word to us as we hear of Joshua's rise to leadership. We will also share in a special hymn sing where we can pick our favorite hymns at the end of the service.

July 31-Psalm 121: This Psalm gives assurance for people on journeys with and for God. The assurance is that God goes with us on every journey an Psalm 121 gives us the word of assurance.

We hope you'll try to join us for worship as we journey

A SUMMER OF SHARING AND ASKING GOD TO GUIDE US

This past winter and early spring we spent many hours in Open Forum Meetings trying to listen for God's will for our congregation. We also did a major survey and demographic study of our ministry area using the material from Percept, a study group that specializes in such studies for churches seeking to clarify their future ministry. All the material is now collected, and has been shared with the Session. During this summer we want to share it with you in the next step of our work in seeking God's will.

In order to share this information and discuss the options we might have for our future as a congregation of God's people, Phil will be leading a presentation of the Percept and Open Forum results on four separate days during the month of July. You are invited to attend any or all of these meeting to hear the results and talk about the meaning that these results might have for our congregation, the options God is putting before us, and the decision making process we will be facing. We need your prayerful thoughts and input, so we hope you will come to at least one of the meetings.

These meetings will be held on the following dates:

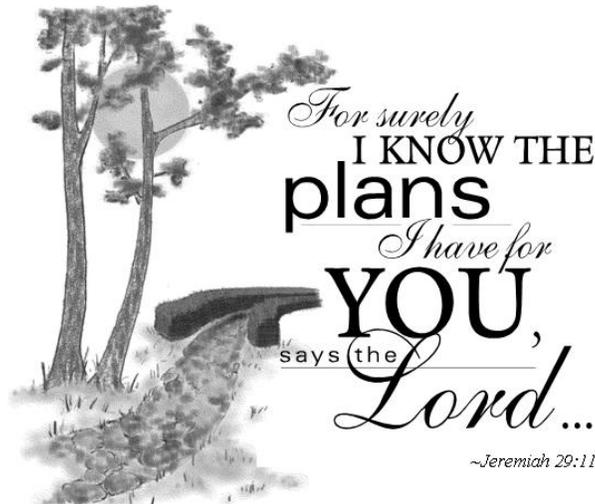
Sunday, July 10, after church from 11:15 a.m. until 12:15 p.m. in the Library

Wednesday, July 13, at 7:00 p.m. in the church Library

Sunday, July 17, after church from 11:15 a.m. until 12:15 p.m. in the Library

Tuesday, July 26, at 7:00 p.m. in the church Library

Further meetings will be set up in August for those who can't make any of the July meetings. We hope that you'll make a special effort to attend one or more of these important events.





Remember the 4 R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair

As we make small changes in our consumer habits we are also changing the inner attitudes of our minds. We put more thought into our daily consumption and we discover that we are leading a more peaceful lifestyle.

Today I am writing a few more suggestions to improve your personal health and the environment.

- Eat organic or pesticide-free foods whenever possible. Shop at farmer's markets or plant your own garden (no chemicals).
- Read all labels to avoid food additives such as MSG, trans fats and artificial sweeteners and artificial colors; they can cause behavioral and health problems.
- Choose filtered tap water over bottled; it will have fewer bacteria and chemical contaminants. The bottled water industry is largely unregulated in the United States. Choose glass or stainless steel water containers.
- Use natural, chemical-free body care products and cosmetics with the newest and safest ingredients.
- Be cautious of any products with 'fragrance,' including shampoos, lotions, and perfumes. Pick those made with essential oils instead.
- Clean your house with nontoxic natural cleaning products. Try vinegar, baking soda, and hydrogen peroxide. Avoid chlorine bleach, strong solvents, ammonia, and antibacterial products made with triclosan, and well as synthetically fragranced candles, laundry detergents, air fresheners, and dryer sheets.
- Sleep on a mattress made from untreated, nontoxic natural materials. If you cannot afford a new mattress, buy a wool and organic natural cotton mattress topper to cover your mattress.
- Switch to sheets and towels made with bamboo or organic cotton. Regular cotton is one the most intensively sprayed crops in the world. By some estimates, cotton accounts for 25% of all pesticides used in the United States.

Get rid of nonstick, Teflon cooking pans; they emit potentially toxic fumes when heated. Use cast iron, stainless steel, enamel, or glass cookware.

Here is something that I just learned about labeling: "**Conventional**" means pesticides were used; "**organic**" means 95% of the product contains no pesticides; "**100% organic**" means none of the product contains pesticides. Check the PLU (price look-up) number on the stickers of fruits and vegetables. Conventionally grown produce has four numbers; organically grown has five numbers prefaced by the number 9; GMO produce has five numbers prefaced by the number 8. (Example: a conventionally grown Fuji apple is 4131; organic is 94131; GMO is 84131.) GMO is a genetically modified organism or genetically engineered organism (GEO) is an organism whose genetic material has been altered using genetic engineering techniques. **READ LABELS CAREFULLY!**

Did you know? New York is currently the third-highest polluting state in the union, with each resident producing roughly eleven metric tons of carbon emissions each year. But thanks to the encouragement of environmental activists Governor Andrew Cuomo recently passed the On-Bill Recovery plan. Now, New York may soon lead the nation in green jobs and energy efficiency programs.

Currently, commercial and industrial housing units account for more than 60 percent of the state's greenhouse gas emissions. On-bill recovery will allow middle-class New Yorkers — in other words, the majority of homeowners — to retrofit their buildings in a way that would maximize energy efficiency. This will amount to over \$1 billion in homeowner savings and the creation of 60,000 jobs in the private sector. Plus, the on-bill recovery act will have the same impact on carbon reduction as removing 4.5 million cars from the road — Good news - a huge breakthrough! Have you been making some changes in your lifestyle? Let me hear from you.

Don't forget, together we can make a difference.

Lesley Haynes – peacesojourner@yahoo.com

GROWING TOGETHER IN THE FAITH

ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES THIS SUMMER

Summer is a season when many people have a little more time to stop and smell the roses, to ponder the grace of God in our lives. During the Summer of 2011 we are making a special effort to give you the opportunity to study God's Word to us if you are able to make the effort. We will offer three discussion groups per week and hope that you'll make a special effort to come to one or more of them. Here's the opportunity list:



ADULT CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION

Sunday mornings: Since our Worship has moved to a 10:00 a.m. service for the summer, our Adult Education class will move to 11:15 a.m. after church and be held in the Library for the month of July. We won't meet at all on July 3 due to the Independence Day holiday, but the rest of the month will offer lots of fun and good learning together.

July 10: Discussion of the Percept and Open Forum Results and the implications of the information for our future as a congregation.

July 17: Further discussion of Percept and Open Forum Results.

July 24: A look at Revelation. This last book of the Scripture is one of the books that Christians study least because many find it "too scary." We will look at this wonderful part of God's Word and the lessons it has for Christians today. This class will last throughout July and August, with one week in August off to discuss the Percept and Open Forum again for those who haven't come before. We will also skip August 14 when we will worship together with the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterians at their building.

July 31: Begin the study of Revelation.

Wednesday afternoons: From 1:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. we will study the Psalms. These 150 hymns and poems of our faith form the basis for almost all Christian spirituality and we will be looking at many of them to get the flavor of this delightful part of our Holy Scriptures. We meet every week so feel free to come when you can.

Thursday evenings: Phil's study is the meeting place for this vibrant group of Bible students who will soon embark on a new study together. We'll begin the study of the Book of Amos on July 7. This fascinating 8th Century B.C. prophet has much to say to faithful people today. We begin at 7:00 p.m. and are finished by about 8:30 p.m. and would love to welcome you.

We are very informal and will love to see you whenever you can come see us!

Garden Walk

Volunteers Needed

Saturday & Sunday, July 30-31

First Church is again participating in the Buffalo Garden Walk. This eagerly anticipated annual event will be held Saturday and Sunday, July 30 and 31 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Membership Committee is asking for your help to be on hand to promote First Church and our Bicentennial as thousands of participants tour the Garden Walk.

If you are available to be on hand as a volunteer for any period of time this last weekend in July, please call the Church Office to schedule, or fill out the form below and either place it in the offering plate or mail to One Symphony Circle, Buffalo 14201.

Thank you in advance for giving your time and talent to this popular event!



Yes! I am available to help with the Garden Walk!

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Availability

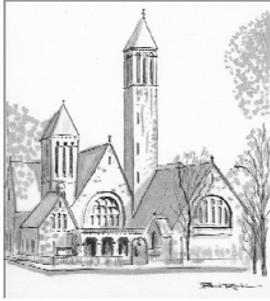
___ Saturday, July 30 ___ Sunday, July 31

Time: _____

Please return the bottom portion of this page to the church office.

Thank you!





FIRST CHURCH HISTORY: INTERIM PASTOR PROFILE

By Bruce McCausland, Bicentennial Committee Chair

Angus Miles Watkins: (-) Interim Pastor (15 August 1996 – 15 August 1999) Pastor Watkins was interim pastor during a transitional phase when the Administrative Commission of Presbytery took control of First Presbyterian Church between 24 July 1996 through 11 March 1997. Pastor Watkins grew-up among the Native American communities of South Dakota and Montana where his father worked for the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Denomination. He was a graduate of Bowling Green University of Ohio with a Degree in Music; afterward he was a 1970 graduate of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and was ordained 1 May 1970. He has served diverse congregations in Pittsburgh, PA; Minneapolis, MN; Buffalo, NY; Cleveland, OH and places in between. Besides serving variously as assistant pastor, associate pastor, pastor, transition pastor, interim pastor and stated supply pastor over the years, he directed a community ministry in northwest Pennsylvania and worked with a Seneca congregation in Jimersontown, NY which is outside Salamanca, NY.

Between 1996 and his retirement in 2007 pastor Watkins specialized in interim pastorates at the First Presbyterian Church in Buffalo, NY; First Presbyterian Church in Lockport, NY; First Presbyterian Church in Jamestown, NY; First Presbyterian Church in Westfield, NY and Church of the Western Reserve outside Cleveland, OH, helping each congregation assess and prepare to call installed pastors. Rev. Watkins was a past winner of a New York State Council on the Arts writer-in-residence competition for Western New York and other writing awards, including a fellowship to spend a summer living among the Crees and Inuits of northern Quebec writing about the impact of hydroelectric dam development on the region and its peoples. He has served as a poet-in-residence with First Presbyterian Church in Jamestown, NY. Pastor Watkins is an avid nature photographer, and serves on the Arts Council for Chautauqua County. A gentle and kind man who is well-rounded and universally-liked by all who encounter him, he is closely attuned to nature. Besides poetry and photography, he enjoys hiking, fishing, and canoeing in the wilderness, as well as music, literature, and movies. He and his wife Anne, now grandparents, have a home in the woods of Chautauqua County, their children now grown, both Angus and his wife Anne regularly participate the Allegheny Nature Pilgrimage each May.



Clerk's Corner

By Janet Hill, Clerk of Session

The following actions were taken at the June 15th meeting of Session. The Session meeting was preceded by a joint meeting with the Board of Deacons. At its meeting, Session...

- Formed a committee of Don Houck and Jean Hess, with the authority to add a member of the congregation, to draft a Mission Study based on the findings of the Percept material and the Open Forum meetings.
- Decided to set up a Session planning retreat during the summer to discuss the future of First Church and to look at all alternatives.
- Approved a proposal to resurface the parking lot at a cost of \$13,775.
- Elected Janet Hill clerk of Session for a one-year term.

News in the Family

Dear Friends & Family from First Church:

My sincerest 'thank you' to all of you who sent me cards, called me on the phone, or spoke to me in person after Chuck passed away. You provided me with an overwhelming sense of comfort at a time when I needed it most. It made me realize how special all of you have become to me over the last 25 years. I feel truly blest to be a part of the First Church family.

My most heartfelt thanks!!
David Bond



July Birthdays

- Gregg Borland
- Jamie Bradford
- Andrew Darby
- Madeline Darby
- Stephanie Graham
- Lesley Haynes
- Betty Hearnley
- Yolanda Hunt
- Liz Kamke
- Alex McCausland
- Katherine Murphy
- Rev. John R. Long
- Rich Oakley
- Sig Potembski
- Emily Wettlaufer

I would like to thank everyone who welcomed and worked with the mission group from First Presbyterian Church - Allentown, especially JoAnn Doerr, Liz Kamke, Michael Henry and the staff of FPC. A special thank you goes to the folks from Allentown themselves. Their efforts spruced up the outside landscape, cleaned the Narthex and helped to pack up the library to make way for the charter school.

—Ellen Henry

Hats Off to everyone who attended the Hat Tea. While you were enjoying the delicious goodies from Liz Kolken of the Quaker Bonnet and delighting in the company of your friends in their interesting headgear, you contributed \$200 for the Hogar Clinica in Peru.

Thanks so much! Have a good summer and look for upcoming Fall activities of the Women's Association.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the congregation and the Christian Education Committee for the lovely reception on my last "official" day at FPC. Your support and good wishes mean everything to me.

Ellen Henry



Bookkeeper's Corner

MAY 2011 FINANCIAL ITEMS	Actual YTD May 31, 2011	Actual YTD May 31, 2010
Total Income	\$210,722	\$260,520
Total Expenses	\$275,521	\$224,928
Deficit support from the Endowment	\$13,145	\$51,917

HIGHLIGHTS	Actual YTD May 31, 2011	Actual YTD May 31, 2010
Pledge Income	\$132,896	\$130,253
Plate Income	\$5,245	\$6,514



PENNIES FOR HEAVEN

In May, a new Stewardship program was launched called "Pennies for Heaven." If you haven't already gotten your First Church coin box, please pick one up.

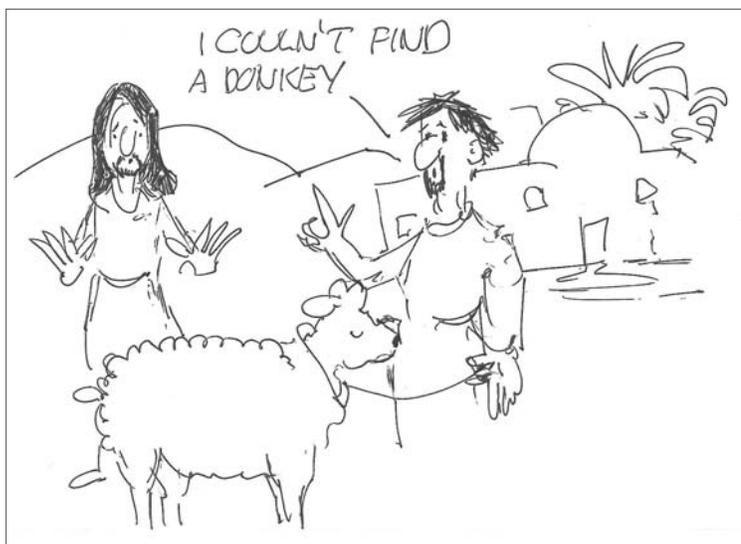
The idea is to save your loose change and return your coin box to church anytime. This is an ongoing program, and every penny, nickel, dime and quarter will be counted and reflected in plate income in the operating budget.

The first four weeks of the program brought in over \$155! Way to go!

Thank you in advance for contributing to this new program!

Sig Art

Illustrated by Sig Potembski



First Church Calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<p>3 10:00 AM — Worship & Communion, Rev. Dr. Philip S. Gittings preaching 11:00 AM — Fellowship Time</p>	<p>4 INDEPENDENCE DAY BUILDING CLOSED</p>	<p>5 10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg. 4:30-6:00 PM — LV Tutoring</p>
<p>10 10:00 AM — Worship, Rev. Dr. Gittings preaching 10:15 AM — Sunday school 11:00 AM — Fellowship Time 11:15 AM — Percept & Open Forum Discussion</p>	<p>11 BUILDING CLOSED</p>	<p>12 10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg. 4:30-6:00 PM — LV Tutoring</p>
<p>17 10:00 AM — Worship, Rev. Dr. Gittings preaching 10:15 AM — Sunday school 11:00 AM — Fellowship Time 11:15 AM — CMO Committee Meeting 11:15 AM — Percept & Open Forum Discussion</p>	<p>18 BUILDING CLOSED 6:00 PM — Stewardship Mtg.</p>	<p>19 10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg. 7:00 PM — Officer Training 7:00 PM — Lands & Bldgs. Mtg.</p>
<p>24 10:00 AM — Worship, Rev. Dr. Gittings preaching 10:15 AM — Sunday school 11:00 AM — Fellowship Time 11:15 AM — Adult Christian Education</p>	<p>25 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE BUILDING CLOSED</p>	<p>26 10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg. 7:00 PM — Percept & Open Forum Discussion</p>
<p>31 GARDENWALK 10:00 AM — Worship, Rev. Dr. Gittings preaching 10:15 AM — Sunday school 11:00 AM — Fellowship Time 11:15 AM — Adult Christian Education</p>	<p>August 1 BUILDING CLOSED</p>	<p>August 2 10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg. 5:00 PM — Christian Education Mtg</p>

July 2011

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
6 1:00-3:00 PM — Bible Study 4:30-6:00 PM — LV Tutoring	7 7:00 PM — Bible Study	July 1 8 7:00 PM — Film Discussion	2 BUILDING CLOSED 9 BUILDING CLOSED
13 1:00-3:00 PM — Bible Study 4:30-6:00 PM — LV Tutoring 7:00 PM — Percept & Open Forum Discussion	14 5:00 PM — CE Director Search Committee Meeting 7:00 PM — Bible Study	15	16 BUILDING CLOSED
20 1:00-3:00 PM — Bible Study 7:00 PM — Session Meeting	21 7:00 PM — Bible Study	22	23 BUILDING CLOSED
27 1:00-3:00 PM — Bible Study	28 7:00 PM — Bible Study	29	30 GARDENWALK
August 3 1:00-3:00 PM — Bible Study	August 4 7:00 PM — Bible Study	August 5	August 6 BUILDING CLOSED

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OFFICERS

SESSION AND TRUSTEES BY CLASS AND TERM

Clerk of Session

Janet Hill

Associate Clerk of Session

Joan Close

Class of 2012

JoAnn Doerr (2)

Jean Hess (1)

Janet Hill (1)

Don Houck (T) (1)

Quinton Meyer (1)

Roger Woodard (2)

Class of 2013

Ian Bradford (T) (1)

Summer Flaherty (T) (2)

Norm Gibbon (T) (2)

Mike Henry (1)

Henry Porter (T) (2)

William Schulz (2)

Class of 2014

Mark Armesto (T) (1)

Carlton Brownell (T) (2)

John Darby (T) (2)

Lauren Hill (2)

Marv Riegler (2)

Erica Wichtowski (1)

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

BOARD OF DEACONS BY CLASS AND TERM

Class of 2012

Gregg Borland (2)

Jessica Laudisio (1)

Madeline Mason (2)

Judith Paradzai (1)

Lovelace Quarshie (2)

Phil Sims (1)

Denis Wettlaufer (1)

Class of 2013

Mark Juan Armesto (1)

Debra Byrne (2)

José Gomez (1)

Susan Koeppel (1)

Alexander Lipnicki (1)

Stephanie Lipnicki (1)

Suzanne Snyder (2)

Class of 2014

Pat Brown (1)

Russell Carlson (2)

Mary Field (2)

*Karen Frieder (2)

Maria Murphy (2)

Olga Rico-Armesto (1)

Lou Ann Luther Riegler (1)

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 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

Quinton Meyer, *Associate for Pastoral Visitation*

Meyer405@aol.com

Voicemail extension: 12

Christina Trachtenberg, *Business Manager*

CTrachtenberg@firstchurchbuffalo.org

Voicemail extension: 11

Tim Neaverth, *Building Supervisor*

TNeaverth@firstchurchbuffalo.org

Voicemail extension: 22

Liz Kamke, *Outreach Assistant*

EKSK476@gmail.com

Tom Hollfelder, *Custodian/Security Guard*

Church Office, extension 10

**For pastoral care concerns,
call Quinton Meyer, Associate for Pastoral
Visitation**

884-7250, ext. 12 (Office) 909-2259 (Cell)

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