



LIGHT FROM THE TOWER

June 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.



Adult Christian Education

Phil Gittings has challenged, asked, and prayed for all our young adults and everyone else interested in ministry with young adults to attend the very special discussions on Sunday mornings during June! We hope you'll come— no matter what your age.

During the month of June our Adult Sunday School will be sharing a very special few weeks together. At 9:30 a.m. each Sunday this month we will meet to discuss the June 2014 issue of our denomination's magazine, "Presbyterians Today." The issue is totally given over to articles by and about young adults and their vision for the church. The articles focus on a variety of topics including embracing new leaders, 11 practical ways to engage young adults, and one called "Preach this, tweet that!" There's even an article called "The Word Made Flesh" that talks about tattoos as a spiritual practice.

So if you want an interesting, exciting and absolutely wonderful experience of learning in June, then come to Sunday school at 9:30 a.m. each Sunday. Maybe God's Spirit will teach us all some wonderful new things if you join us for this class.

July/August Program

Did you ever look across a few pews on a Sunday morning, see someone who was worshipping with you and wonder to yourself, "How does he think about Christian faith when he goes to work?" Did you ever see someone you know involved in a special project for a charity or some other good cause and say to yourself, "She really lives out her faith in this charity"?

Jesus Christ's people talk a lot of generalities about living out our faith when we leave the sanctuary, but very seldom do we really talk turkey about it. So, during the months of July and August our Adult Sunday School class will focus on the topic, "How I Live My Faith Outside the Church Walls!" Each week one of our members will be asked to tell the class something about the work they do in their jobs, or some activity they are involved in where they take their faith into the world. We are still getting all the Sunday leaders lined up, but every week we will hear a different member or friend of First Presbyterian Church tell us their story. Watch for the exact schedule in the next newsletter.



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

What is God's Spirit trying to teach you? How is the Holy Spirit attempting to teach you whatever it is that God thinks you need to know next?

Even before Jesus spoke his farewell discourse on the night before the crucifixion the Israelites and subsequently the church has believed that one of the tasks of God's Spirit is to teach us God's ways. In that last discourse Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as an Advocate (kind of like a lawyer who speaks for and defends you), as a Spirit of Truth, as a Comforter, and as a teacher.

So, what do you believe God's Spirit is trying to teach you, and how is that teaching being done?

As we close in on the summer months here at First Presbyterian Church with celebrations of the Ascension of Christ on June 1, and then Pentecost on June 8, I am going to be asking more questions like this. I hope you will try to answer them. Too often we Christian people talk a bit in worship about God's Spirit working, but we can't really name God's work in our life or in our world. Unless we name specific things we believe God is doing we find that our faith and our lives as Christians become less and less focused.

I believe that God is trying to teach us how to reach out with the gospel in ways we never have reached before. The opportunities that have come our way during the last few months for ministry, outreach, and spiritual growth may well be signs that God is ready to turn our congregation around and give us new power in our faith and in our relationships. I see signs of these new lessons in the relationships I experience in our church and in the community around us. The neighborhood is taking more and more interest in our church, our building, and in what goes on in the congregation. These are all signs that God is at work.

So the question still comes: What is God trying to teach you, me, and the rest of our congregation. I hope you'll take time this summer to find your personal answer to the question, and to do something faithful about it.

May God bless us all!

Phil Gittings



June is a Great Month to Worship!

The month of June this year is full of special opportunities to sing God's praises and share experiences of God's love in our lives. Look:

June 8 — The Day of Pentecost

On Pentecost the Holy Spirit came whooshing down in to Jerusalem with the gift of tongues and new understanding of the mission of the church. Pentecost is called "The Birthday of the Church" for good reason, and we hope you'll come celebrate our birthday together. Our young people will share in a special observance of Pentecost during the service and all of us will look and listen for God's Spirit in our lives.

June 15 — Trinity Sunday

What do we mean when we say that we believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The idea of the Trinity, the Three in One God we worship is celebrated the week after Pentecost and this year will be no exception. We will hear about what it means to believe in the one God who discloses God's self in three persons. We hope you'll join us for this time of worship together.

June 22 — 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

What the heck is Ordinary Time? For the Christian church Ordinary Time is as important as any holiday or special Sunday we can name. Sometimes holding the faith in Ordinary Time is hard. This summer, during Ordinary Time, we will work on ways to not only hold onto our faith but grow with it. On June 22 we'll hear what Christ has to say about what we should and should not fear, and how following our Savior can be hard at times and in ways we might not expect.

June 29 — 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The month of June will close with a discussion of what it means to receive the Word of God and how even the little things can become incredibly important to us in our faith journey.

June 8th After Worship

The idea of a Prayer Walk was introduced to the Session through one of their book studies. We are so excited to have one after worship on June 8. Everyone interested in seeing the immediate neighborhood outside our walls in a prayerful manner should gather in the Narthex after worship. We will walk our neighborhood with keen intention on what we see, hear, and feel, and lift it all to our Lord. If the group is interested pizza will be served immediately following the prayer walk!



Fostering Spiritual Growth

Praise the Lord for Springtime! This year especially, we are enjoying the beauty of a reborn Earth. I love the lush green foliage that is part of the Buffalo ambience! We are just as much a part of God's creation as the flowers, shrubs, and trees, and should be seeing to our new growth as well. There are several passages in the Bible that use the image of growing plants to describe our faith and our relationship to God. The common thread in these passages is that we must be good gardeners. If we want faith like a mustard seed, we must nurture that seed.

So how do you need to grow in your faith this summer? What steps are you taking to make sure that the seeds of faith planted in you are healthy, growing, and bearing fruit? If you are a parent, how are you nurturing spirituality in your children?

As a community of faith, First Presbyterian Church is committed to providing opportunities for people to grow in faith (remember, *fostering spiritual growth* is in our mission statement). We continue to provide a number of opportunities for everyone in our faith community to grow spiritually.

This summer, while the faithful Sunday School teachers take a break, I will be providing Sunday morning education for children who are in attendance. This will be a group for all ages and will continue to use the lectionary-based curriculum *Feasting on the Word*. This allows for children to learn and think about the same Bible passages that adults are hearing about in the Sanctuary every week. The children will also have "take-home" papers which they can share with parents and other family members. Talk to your children about these papers, and what they learned, and how it relates to what YOU learned that week in worship. I will also be displaying some of the children's work in the Narthex, so it can be shared with other people in our church.

Another activity for the children this summer is that we will be making a paper attendance chain. A new link will be added to the chain for every child in attendance on every Sunday. It will be fun to watch the chain grow!

As we enter into this season of growth and fun, I hope you will join me in praying for everyone involved in Christian Education at First Presbyterian Church of Buffalo. I pray this will be a summer when we all sprout new shoots of faith!

Peace of Christ to You,
Meg

Mom's Playgroup

Attention Mothers of Young Children!

In keeping with our commitment to fostering spiritual growth, the CE committee is starting a group for mothers of young children. This group will provide both fellowship and educational opportunities for moms. This group will continue to use ideas from the *Raising Spiritually Healthy Children* program that has been done in the past. Our first meeting is planned for Saturday, June 28 from 3 to 5 p.m. in the Chapel. For more information, contact Erica Wichtowski or Meg Doerzbacher!



First Presbyterian Church presents:

SUMMER JAZZ WORSHIP



Sundays, July 6 and August 3

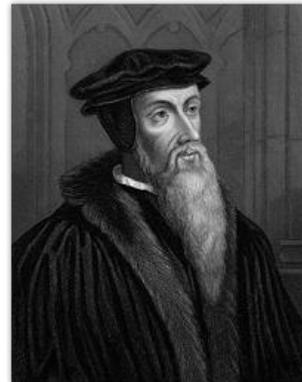
5:30 PM Potluck

7 PM Jazz Worship



Women's Book Club

Women's Book group will meet on **Thursday, June 26** at 6:00 p.m. for a pot luck meal, and discuss the book Nothing Daunted by Dorothy Wickendon. The gathering will be at Joyce Young's home.



Couchside Calvin

The Young Adult Couchside Calvin group will meet on **Tuesday, June 17** at 7:00 PM. The location is still to be determined.

Readings are available on the counter in the Church Office.



A Special
THANK YOU

Allentown Arts Festival June 14-15

Women's Association sends a BIG thank you to Church Life for providing the fruit platters on Mothers' Day, and for all of those who made and won theme baskets that day!

The Allentown Arts Festival will take place Saturday, June 14 and Sunday, June 15. Please note that the festival closes Allen & Wadsworth Streets, as well as Delaware Avenue south of North Street. Please allow extra time to get to church.



Clerk's Corner

The following actions were taken at the joint meeting of Session and the Deacons on May 21, 2014 and the reconvened Session meeting on May 28, 2014.

- ✓ Received the suggested changes to the bylaws and referred them to the next regular meeting of Session.
- ✓ Agreed with Dr. Bond's recommendation for a one-boiler system from MJ Mechanical Services, Inc.
- ✓ Approved a lease with Native Offerings, a CSA farm share group, for the use of the narthex, portico and courtyard one afternoon a week.
- ✓ Kept the rent for Donna Majewski at the same rate.
- ✓ Authorized a guest to set up a table following worship on a date to be determined to offer information and to receive funds for a Tribute Garden for victims and survivors of domestic violence.
- ✓ Authorized Westside Ministries to find a bookshelf in the building and to place it in the food pantry for the use of ExploreBuffalo.
- ✓ Called a congregational meeting for June 22, 2014, the purpose of which is to elect officers.
- ✓ Backed the Americorps initiative with \$7,000 in support.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING CALLED

A congregational meeting of the First Presbyterian Society of the Town of Buffalo has been called for Sunday, **June 22, 2014**, immediately following worship in the Sanctuary for the purposes of receiving the report of the Nominating Committee; electing officers on the Board of Deacons, Session, and Board of Trustees.

June 2014 First Church Calendar Highlights

Regular Sunday Morning Schedule

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

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

Weekly Events

Tuesdays

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

Wednesdays

1:00 PM	Bible Study
4:30 PM	Literacy Tutoring

Committee Meetings

Sun. 6/8	12:15 PM	Deacons
Tues. 6/10	5:15 PM	Membership
Tues. 6/10	6:30 PM	Christian Education
Wed. 6/11	5:45 PM	Trustees
Thurs. 6/12	7:30 PM	CMO
Thurs. 6/12	7:30 PM	One Symphony Cir.
Wed. 6/18	7:00 PM	Session
Wed. 6/25	6:00 PM	P&A
Wed. 6/25	6:30 PM	Church Life

Church Programs/Events

Sun. 6/8	12:15 PM	Prayer Walk
Sun. 6/15 - 8/24		Summer Sunday School
Thurs. 6/26	6:00 PM	Women's Book Club
Sun. 6/15	12:15 PM	Fathers' Day Coffee Hour
Tues. 6/17	7:00 PM	Couchside Calvin
Tues. 6/24		July Newsletter Deadline
Sat. 6/28	3-5 PM	1st Mom's Group Mtg.

Building Use

Thursdays	3-7 PM	Native Offerings Crop Share Pickup
Thurs. 6/12	5:00 PM	AIA Local Chapter Mtg
Fri. 6/13	Evening	Wedding rehearsal
Sat. 6/14	2:00 PM	Nonmember wedding

Save the Date!

Sat. 7/26 - Sun. 7/27	Garden Walk Buffalo
Sun. 9/7	New Life Sunday & Sunday School registration for new program year.

Watch the July newsletter for news
on a second, early worship service
during the summer!



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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FIRST CHURCH STAFF

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The Reverend John Long, D.D.
Parish Associate for Community Outreach
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The Reverend Jack Smiley, *Pastor Emeritus*

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Liz Kamke, *Outreach Assistant*
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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 2014
Mark Armesto (T) (1)
John Darby (T) (2)
Lauren Hill (T) (2)
Marv Riegle (2)
Erica Wichtowski (1)

Class of 2015
Jean Hess (2)
Tim Hess (1)
Janet Hill (2)
Don Houck (T) (2)
Susan Koeppel (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)

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

BOARD OF DEACONS BY CLASS AND TERM

Class of 2014
Pat Brown (1)
Russell Carlson (2)
Mary Field (2)
Karen Frieder (2)
Olga Rico-Armesto (1)
Lou Ann Luther Riegle (1)

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)

* Indicates Co-moderators

**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 3 PM
THURSDAY	9 AM to 3 PM
FRIDAY	9 AM to 12 PM