



LIGHT FROM THE TOWER

September 2013

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 OF BUFFALO

Do you ever promise yourself that you are going to make changes in your life? Lots of people wake up every day promising that this particular day will be different: “I’m going to really work on my relationship with my son (daughter, parents, spouse etc.)” “Today I am going to make a special effort to get caught up on my work.” Sometimes we actually do fulfill these “self-promises,” but most often we start out well and then get bogged down in old patterns, only to find that we have missed the opportunity.

The start of a new school year is a time when lots of young people come back to school with “self-promises” that they will raise their grades or work harder on some special project. Even if people are not in school any longer they will often see the coming of fall as a time to re-start in areas of their lives, not unlike the New Year’s Resolutions” that will come in four short months.

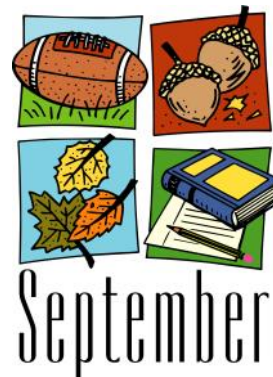
This fall, a lot of us are making a special effort to re-connect with our God. Here at First Presbyterian Church we are involved in a lot of daunting, indeed massive, efforts to seek God’s will as we try to grow our congregation, remain in our building, and fulfill God’s call to ministry. To do this we need for each individual grow in his or her relationship with the God who loves us and is so full of grace.

Seeking renewal by the Spirit of God in worship we will celebrate eight baptisms during the months of September and October, and join together for special times of prayer and worship throughout the fall. Our Young Adult group has undertaken a regular time of prayer and study, reading John Calvin’s Institutes of the Christian Religion as they seek to understand and grow in their faith. We have a Confirmation Class meeting this fall at 9:30 a.m. each week so that some of our youth may prepare to join First Presbyterian Church.

The Fall of 2013 is a good time to re-connect with God together, and everyone is encouraged to use this time to make whatever changes you feel you should make so that your relationship with God and with the creation will be made whole.

May Christ’s Peace be with us all!

Phil



Clerk's Corner — September 2013

At its regularly scheduled meeting on August 21, 2013, Session conducted the following business:

- Maria Oakley and Mark Armesto were authorized to look at the bylaws of the congregation and of the corporation and to suggest changes at the next meeting of Session. A congregational meeting will then be called to approve the changes.
- The baptism of Sedinam Quarshie, daughter of active members Rudrick and Lovelace Quarshie, on September 1, 2013 with worship in the sanctuary was approved.
- The baptism of Sophia Robinson, daughter of nonmembers Jason and Celina Robinson, on September 22, 2013 was approved.
- The baptism of the four children of active member Gifty Koramoah, on October 13 or 20, 2013 was approved.
- The wedding of nonmembers Krista Bauer and Scott St. George on October 26, 2013 with Pastor Robert J. Pagett of the Assemblies of God Church officiating and David Bond, organist, was approved.
- The wedding of nonmembers Kelly Flanagan and Chris Dent on March 18, 2014 with a First Church pastor officiating and David Bond, organist, was approved.
- Shannon Rogers was received into membership and her name is to be placed on the active roll.
- A request from Church Life to take \$1,500 from the Perry Bequest to cover the cost of advertising for the Christian Rock Concert on October 18th was approved.
- Lands and Buildings will set the policy as to who should have keys to the building.
- A letter of support for Jericho Road to seek funds from the Presbytery of WNY in support of its partnership with a woman seeking to set up a clinic in Sierra Leone was authorized.
- Session accepted the following motions, which were duly made and carried at the meeting of the Board of Trustees.
- A process for leases presented by Westside Ministries (WSM) was approved:
 - Trustees will work with WSM to develop a lease template;
 - WSM is to email new draft leases to the President of the Board of Trustees and Chair of Lands and Buildings, who will immediately circulate for review;
 - Trustees will review financial aspects and promptly make a recommendation to session at the following meeting or a specially called meeting;
 - The Session will vote promptly at the next meeting.
- The gift amount for 2013 for Section 11 (ministry in a foreign land) of the Jones Bequest was set at \$200.
- The implementation of Electronic Fund Transfers (EFT) for stewardship through Hubbard Press was approved.

Confirmation Class 2013

On Sunday mornings, from 9:30-10:30 a.m., beginning September 15, Reverend Phil Gittings will be leading a Confirmation class for students in grades 6-9. In using the curriculum *Can We Talk? Conversations for Faith*, students will explore topics like what their purpose is in this world, sin and forgiveness, the Holy Spirit and a relationship with Christ, the church and its mission, the sacraments and the Lord's Prayer, and develop an idea of how God expects us to live. During the eight weeks of Confirmation class, students will be expected to remain in worship, instead of going to Sunday School, so that they can reflect on the issues they are learning about in class.



The confirmation journey is about students taking over the promises made on their behalf in baptism, in order to make their faith their own. It is a time to ask questions and to search for and reflect on who God is calling them to be. Upon completion of this course, confirmands will join in full adult membership and participation in the life, worship, and mission of the church. Let us hold all of these faithful students in our prayers and take them under our wing as they venture into this next phase of their faith journeys.



Adult Christian Education Class

Is there something about being a woman that transcends time and cultural differences? A class starting September 15, at 9:30 in the morning in Historical Hall, led by Virginia McIntyre and Maria Oakley will examine both beloved and little known heroines of the Bible. As you learn about them, you may be surprised at what you learn about yourself. Many of the issues these women faced are issues of urgent importance to women today. Although much has changed since the first woman walked the earth, one thing remains the same; being a woman is as challenging as it ever was. Come discover the uniqueness of womanhood- the things that after all these years still unite us as daughters of Eve.

Come see how God enabled ordinary woman to live extraordinary lives. How? By turning their weaknesses into strengths, their sorrows into joys, and their despair into hope. Along the way, you will learn great truths about God Himself.

God's women of yesterday speak boldly to God's women of today! The women of the Bible play an integral, essential, and crucial role in the eternal plan of God. From heaven's point of view, women are always unique, matchless, and irreplaceable. They are never to be found in a subservient ranking within the Kingdom Of God. Moreover, these women demonstrate to us the lofty ideals of faith and faithfulness, virtues and values, brains and beauty, redemption and resourcefulness, servant-hood and sacrifice. What made these women and many others so remarkable? They loved God passionately, looked to Him in life's daily challenges, and yielded to His transforming grace. And you can enjoy God's miraculous work in your life today by following in their footsteps.

Through a detailed study of Miriam, Esther, Lydia, Deborah, Ruth and Mary , mother of God you will learn that God has called today's woman to play a significant role in society, in the home and the church. You will learn from their mistakes and discover the blessings of God heaped upon the woman who faithfully trusts the Lord in all situations. Each timeless biblical story mirrors the challenges and changes today's woman faces. Through understanding these women's lives, this class will help you discover the God behind their stories and yours. This class will last 6 weeks and will have open enrollment which means you need not be present at every class to reap a benefit. There is no text, other than the Bible.

"Financial Fast" Discussion Series

Join your First Church family on a Financial Fast starting September 15th after worship. We will explore the history of fasting within our faith and begin a 21 day fast to understand our finances, what motivates our financial decisions, break the habit of overspending, budget properly, handle money with a partner, learn how to handle debt, save for the future and stop worrying about money. This is a class for financial beginners and those who already know a thing or two about the financial world. We will use the book The Power to Prosper by Michelle Singletary, author of the nationally syndicated "*The Color of Money*" column. This class will require daily reading and journaling. We will meet for four Sundays, September 15th through October 6th to track our progress and reflect as a group. No reading required for the first class. Please let the church office know if you would like to attend the class or have a book ordered so you can follow along on your own.



We have been doing some exciting things this past year and hope to provide even more dynamic events to nurture and foster our church relationships this coming year. On **September 8th** immediately following worship we will have our annual Welcome Back Luncheon. Back by popular demand we will serve tasty samplings from The Whole Hog food truck!

Friday, October 18th we will host yet another Christian Rock Concert! This one promises to be bigger and better than last year! So mark your calendar.

This past August we hosted another coffee house with about 40 people present. Jeff Faunce from North Presbyterian Church provided the entertainment with his talented voice and guitar. One church member remarked that it was the best time she had in church in a long time!

April promises another Gospel Music Festival. We have been challenged to step it up a notch by one of the other churches involved. While our hearts were in the right place when we scheduled it in February last year for Black History Month we learned that Buffalo weather simply did not cooperate, so April it is!

As the committee looks towards the future we recognize that we need more fresh ideas and more church members and friends on our committee. Please come to a meeting and check us out! Perhaps Church Life is where your gifts from God can be used for a short time or a long time. You decide.

Welcome Westside Ministries!

On August 15th, First Church and Westside Ministries officially entered into a partnership for management of the church's facilities and tenants. The terms of the partnership were approved by Session in July, and details were discussed at the congregational meeting in August.

Westside Ministries is a faith-based, non-profit organization. Their mission seeks to stabilize Buffalo's under-resourced West side through economic and community development.

In so many ways, bringing Westside Ministries on board is an answer to prayer. With the needs of the building being tended to by Westside Ministries, our efforts can be focused on growing the congregation and providing faithful programs for members.

Jeff Jones, the Executive Director of Westside Ministries, says that he is "happy and excited to partner with First Presbyterian Church. Westside Ministries sees it as a service to the community."

We are very happy to partner as well! Welcome!



SONGS FOR THE SAVIOR CHRISTIAN ROCK CONCERT

Friday, October 18th, 2013

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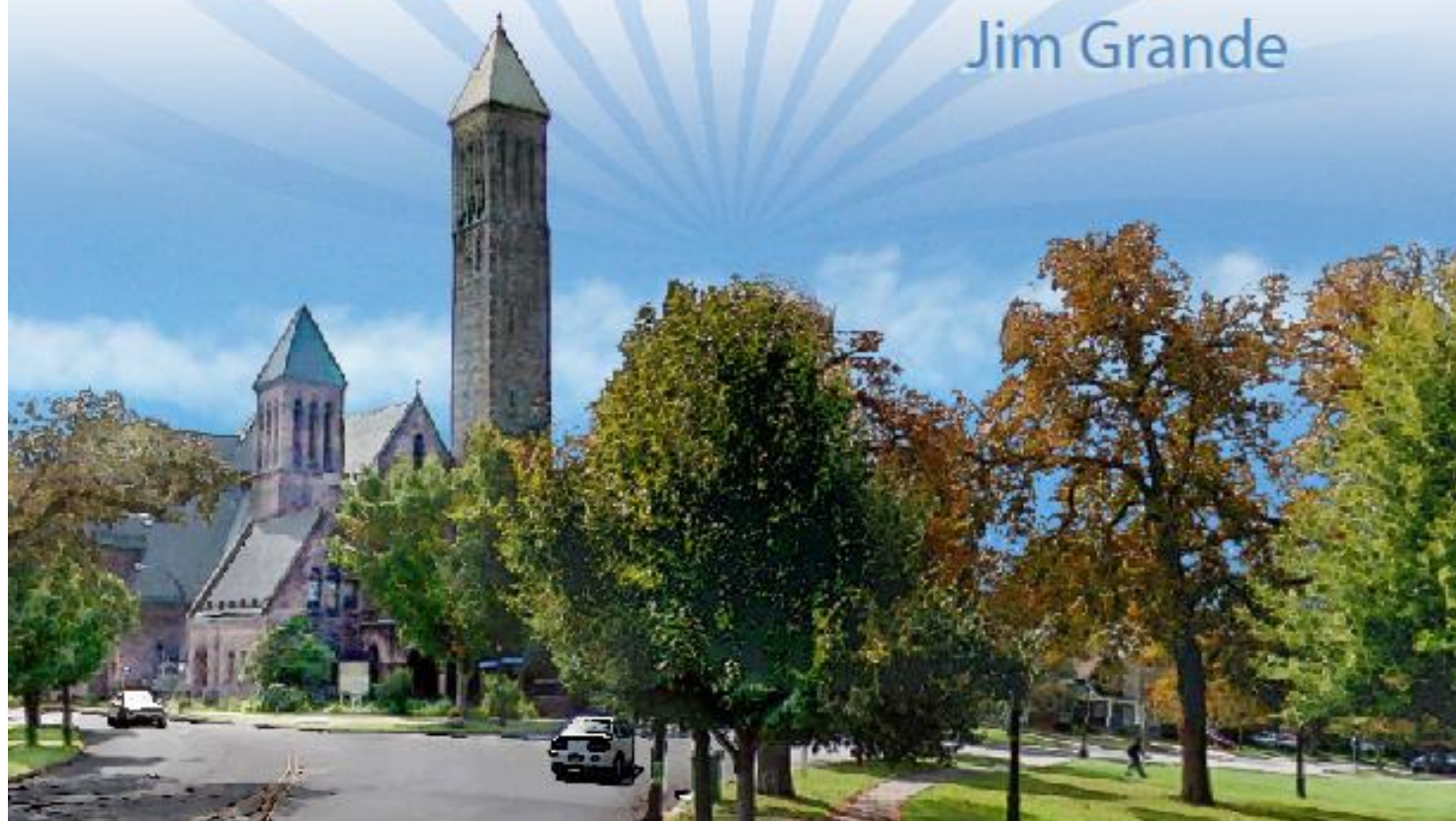
7:00 PM

FEATURING:

First Presbyterian Church
One Symphony Circle
(Across from Kleinhans)
Buffalo NY 14201

884-7250

Elmwood Drive
Soul Esteem
Walking Deadmen
and
Jim Grande



First Fridays Allentown

First Church has been participating in First Fridays Allentown. This monthly event showcases Allentown's art galleries, restaurants, businesses, and rich cultural attractions (like First Church!). This neighborhood-wide event happens on the first Friday of each month in the evening. Times vary based on events and locations; First Church's gatherings will generally happen from 7-9 p.m. Here's a look at September and October's plans:

September 6 — Storytelling event hosted by Kevin Cunningham of K.C.'s Fitness

A free will offering to benefit One Symphony Circle will be collected.

October 4 — Educational lecture on feral cats in cities and a cat/kitten adoption expo with local animal rescue group Buffalo Humane.

Show the community how proud we are of our church! Attend these event and demonstrate what a cultural asset we are to Buffalo! Help is always needed to help with set up and clean up as well! Speak to Christina Banas to volunteer.

FIRST CHURCH ART GALLERY

At each First Fridays Allentown, the artwork of a local artist is displayed. This month's artist is Mark McKee. Her work will be on display and for sale during the month of September. Stop to admire Mary's beautiful works in the Narthex.

Artist Bio:

Mary McKee decided to pursue painting when a friend suggested she take art classes. She continues to take classes and focuses on her love for Chinese brush painting and pastel on varied papers.

Chinese brush painting is painted with Chinese watercolors on rice paper. Using homemade paste she attaches another piece of rice paper to the back of her painting then lets it dry for several days. Theresa Lee, Master Art Instructor, taught Mary this ancient Chinese art form.

An array of subjects: nature, flowers, wildlife, local sites, and travel highlights are painted by Mary.

Mary McKee is Secretary for the Kenmore Art Society. Besides her art, Mary enjoys travel with her husband Ed, time with her granddaughter, volunteering, entertaining guests and reading.

ESTATE SALE COMMITTEE FORMING

First Church has a lot of stuff! A lot of it we don't need anymore. Session has approved a one-time estate sale to declutter the church. We will also seek donations of high-end items to be donated to the church to sell at the estate sale. There's a lot of revenue to be made!

Christina Banas is forming a committee to get to work. The tasks to be done are to identify items in the church to sell, pick a date, hire a service to help, and more. Contact Christina at 884-7250, x 11 or CBanas@firstchurchbuffalo.org.

Let's get going!



News in the Family



Singing Your Praises

Many First Churchers have recently volunteered their time, talent and treasure to help congregation.

We offer a big “THANK YOU” to the following:

- ☆ Everyone who volunteered to assist with the Sunday School cleanout on August 24-25! Especially Rebecca Laubenstein for organizing it!
- ☆ Virginia McIntyre who wrote a grant for the literacy program, which was awarded \$1,000 for textbooks from Many Faces of Mercy Giving Program.

Volunteers make a difference! Thank you to all!

We are saddened to accept the resignation of Rebecca Laubenstein as Christian Education Director, but very happy for her that she was offered and accepted a full-time teaching job in the Ken-Ton School District! Congratulations, Rebecca! We will miss you on staff, but are lucky to still have you around as a member!



Deepest sympathies are expressed to the Darby family after the passing of John's mother, Betty, in August.



Nancy Barry is recovering from emergency knee surgery. She is presently in rehab at Northgate Manor in Tonawanda. Cards may be sent to 7264 Nash Road, Tonawanda, NY 14120.

Sig Art

Illustrated by Sig Potembski



With great sadness we share that longtime church member (and “Sig Art” contributor) Sig Potembski passed away after a brief illness. Our thoughts and prayers are with Dottie and their son, David, during this difficult time. A memorial service will be held for Sig on Saturday, September 21 at 2:00 PM in at Canterbury Woods.

Sig drew many of his “sermon-based comics” that have not been published yet. In his memory, we will continue to include “Sig Art” in the newsletter on an occasional basis.

First Church Calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<p>1 BAPTISM 10:00 AM — Summer Worship, Rev. Dr. Gittings 11:00 AM — Fellowship Time 11:15 AM — Adult Christian Ed.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3 10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg. 12:30 PM — Food bag distribution 5:30 PM — Worship & Music Mtg 7:00 PM — Lands & Bldgs. Mtg.</p>
<p>8 NEW LIFE SUNDAY 11:00 AM — Worship & Communion, Rev. Dr. Gittings 12:00 PM — Welcome Back Picnic</p>	<p>9 BUILDING CLOSED</p>	<p>10 10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg. 12:30 PM — Food bag distribution 5:30 PM — Team C Mtg. 6:30 PM — CE Committee Mtg.</p>
<p>15 2 BAPTISMS 9:30 AM — Adult Christian Ed. 9:30 AM — Confirmation Class 11:00 AM — Worship, Rev. Dr. Gittings 12:00 PM — Fellowship Time 12:15 PM — Financial Fast Series</p>	<p>16 BUILDING CLOSED</p>	<p>17 10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg. 12:30 PM — Food bag distribution 5:30 PM — Team C Mtg. 7:00 PM — Board of Deacons Mtg</p>
<p>22 BAPTISM 9:30 AM — Adult Christian Ed. 9:30 AM — Confirmation Class 11:00 AM — Worship, Rev. Dr. Gittings 12:00 PM — Fellowship Time 12:15 PM — Financial Fast Series</p>	<p>23 BUILDING CLOSED</p>	<p>24 10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg. 12:30 PM — Food bag distribution</p>
<p>29 9:30 AM — Adult Christian Ed. 9:30 AM — Confirmation Class 11:00 AM — Worship, Rev. Dr. Gittings 12:00 PM — Fellowship Time 12:15 PM — Financial Fast Series</p>	<p>30 BUILDING CLOSED</p>	<p>October 1 10:30 AM-12:00 PM — Staff Mtg. 12:30 PM — Food bag distribution</p>

September 2013

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
4 1:00-3:00 PM — Bible Study	5	6 7:00-9:00 PM — First Fridays Allentown	7
11 1:00-3:00 PM — Bible Study 5:45 PM — Board of Trustees Mtg.	12	13 3:15 PM — Tour	14
18 1:00-3:00 PM — Bible Study 7:00 PM — Session Mtg.	19	20	21
25 1:00-3:00 PM — Bible Study 7:00 PM — Church Life Mtg.	26	27	28
October 2 1:00-3:00 PM — Bible Study	October 3	October 4 7:00-9:00 PM — First Fridays Allentown	October 5

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OFFICERS

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*
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Voicemail extension: 17

Christina Banas, *Business Manager*
CBanas@firstchurchbuffalo.org
Voicemail extension: 11

Quinton Meyer, *Volunteer Assoc for Pastoral Visitation*
Meyer405@aol.com

Liz Kamke, *Outreach Assistant*
EKSK476@gmail.com

Jason Bravo, *Contemporary Musician*

Tom Hollfelder, *Custodian/Security Guard*

Church Office, extension 10

Weddings, extension 15
weddings@firstchurchbuffalo.org

SESSION AND TRUSTEES BY CLASS AND TERM

Clerk of Session

Janet Hill

Class of 2014

Mark Armesto (T) (1)
Carlton Brownell (T) (2)
John Darby (T) (2)
Lauren Hill (T) (2)
Marv Riegler (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 Lipnicki (1)
Ryan Nadbrzuch (T) (1)
Maria Oakley (1)

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 Riegler (1)

Class of 2015

Eleanor Kamke (1)
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)

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

* Indicates Co-moderators

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