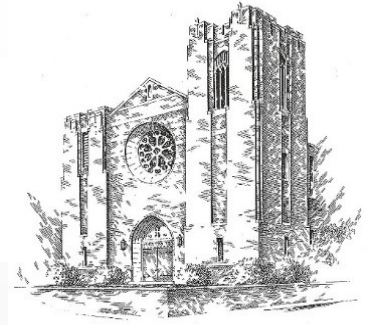


First News

First Reformed United Church of Christ, Lexington, North Carolina



January 2012

Celtic spirituality perceives the expression of the divine presence in nature's beauty and life's rhythms, even the ordinary parts of life. The spirituality approaches the understanding of the interconnectedness of all things. And besides the love of nature and an appreciation of the sacred's relationship with nature, there lies a deep awareness of the soul's deep connection to friendships, which forms a "holy" and "whole" community. It brings the awareness of God into the "everyday" experiences of our lives and a greater appreciation for our "special" moments. It is a joyous way of experiencing our lives, opening ourselves to deeper meaning for our most routine tasks, finding the sacredness in the world around us, and the spiritual richness of our friendships and relationships.

Rev. Jack Wall of Chicago said regarding spiritual traditions:

If [the spiritual practice] is not leading toward the struggle of creating human community, continuing to transform human institutions, being involved in the human enterprise of trying to build up the Earth, somehow bringing that power of God[s] life into the human expression, it is not true spirituality.

Due to the interest in spiritual practices last fall, the Spiritual Practices class desired a continuation of our study and discussions.



Spiritual Practices

So beginning on Tuesday, January 24th at 10 am (for those who are available during the day) and Thursday, January 26th at 7 pm we will begin an 8 week discussion of John Philip Newell's book, *A New Harmony: The Spirit, the Earth and the Human Soul*. The book is available for \$13.12 (with free shipping for a group order) or \$9.99 for the Kindle edition (e-book).

Newell emphasizes creations interconnectedness through Jesus' wisdom and Paul's understanding that when the body is divided the whole is diminished. An understanding that leads to the premise: "Wellness is found not in isolation but in relationship." Newell examines the ancient perceptions of the universe, humanity and faith; followed by the brokenness within our world, both individually and corporately; then concluding with the hope that is inherent within our faith that brings healing and transformation to us, our institutions and our world.

Theologian John O'Donohue shares a Celtic blessing he wrote:

May the sense of something absent enlarge our lives and may our souls be as free as the ever-new waves of the sea. May we succumb to the danger of growth. May we live in the neighborhood of wonder. And may we belong to love with the wildness of dance, and may we know that we are ever embraced in the kind circle of God.

Just another way to say, "Have I told you today that I love you?" Join us Tuesdays or Thursdays at the end of the month.

P.S. Let me take this opportunity to say "Thank you!!!" to ya'll who have contributed to the Angel Tree, the Pastor's Discretionary Fund, the Crisis Ministry, Communities in Schools and the many other benevolences that First Reformed United Church of Christ participates. Without your loving contributions and efforts the lives of others around us would be diminished.

Your RunnRev, Robin

Consistory Highlights—December 2011

Financial Report: Harriette Murphy, Treasurer reported the average weekly offering for the month of November was \$6,022.

Pastor's Report: Reverend Keating offered thanks to all church members who contributed to the Pastor's Discretionary fund. He also reported the Spiritual Practice Study was completed and the attending group expressed interest in some type book study for the next session.



Board of Christian Education: Chris Fulton requested approval for a youth work camp similar to the one the church sponsored two years ago with the participants to be housed in the Education building. The proposed date is the last week of June 2012. The consistory approved the request.

Congregational Life: Chairperson, Ron Hutcheson thanked Alice and James Gray and Nina and Ted Smith for hosting the December first Sunday social. He reminded everyone of the Christmas Celebration meal to be held December 18th.

Board of Business Management and Stewardship:

Property Committee: Co-Chairperson, Mike Brown said the project of replacing lights in the sanctuary has been put on hold until after the holidays. He requested that the \$1,000 approved for this project be increased to \$2,000. The Consistory approved.

Some other concerns the Property committee will be addressing:

- ◆ Complete kitchen cleanup
- ◆ Water problem in the sanctuary bell tower
- ◆ Caulking around windows in sanctuary and Sunday school building

Board of Community Outreach: Chairperson, Edgar Miller thanked the following volunteers who served lunch to the homeless at Grace Episcopal during the month of November:

Dave and Glenyce Fulton, Mike Price, Brian McKerlie, Janette Neal, John Potts, J.W. and Betty Bates, Doug and Barbara Sink, Eddie and Belinda Yates, Adena Wall, and Ramona Yarbrough. Thanks to Kathleen Danze for coordinating.

First Reformed successfully participated in the National UCC "Mission:1" Campaign

The Board of Community Outreach will continue selling alternative gifts for benevolences through Christmas

Evangelism Board: Co-Chairperson, Janette Neal stated that the average monthly attendance for November was 129.

Janette shared a copy of the newly designed First Reformed United Church of Christ Brochure. The consistory approved printing. She offered thanks to Ron and Heidi Hutcheson and Reverend June Grubb for their assistance with this project.

Old Business: Reverend Grubb offered thanks to the outgoing Consistory members: Edgar Miller, Calvin Odom, Betty Link and Mike Brown for their devotion and service.

President Grubb reminded members that Board Chairs and Committees should be in place by the last week of January. The complete list will be published in the February Newsletter.

The revised Vision/Mission Statement was discussed. The Consistory approved changes which will be taken to the Congregational Meeting February 5, 2012 for final approval.

The consistory continued discussion of the Long Range Plan. It was suggested to review the old Long Range Plan to determine what has been achieved and determine what we need to continue to work on.

Reverend Grubb recommended forming a Hymnal Committee to look at a new hymnal. She suggested the Board of Worship and Sacrament and Music Committee work together to form a Hymnal Committee.

Reverend Keating stated that Trudy has expressed an interest in forming a Youth Choir.

Nominating Committee: Chairperson Sylvia Walser made a motion to approve the following as Consistory officers for 2012:

President: **Tom Danze** Vice President: **Reverend June Grubb** Treasurer: **Harriette Murphy** Secretary: **Glenyce Fulton**

CONSISTORY

By: June Grubb, Consistory President

O It is the end of another year, a year that has brought many blessings to those of us who call First Reformed UCC our spiritual home. We are blessed with the presence of our called minister, Robin Keating and his spouse Trudy; we are blessed with a dedicated and capable staff of Paula Lopp, Cathy Waitman, Paul Freeman and Lee Ann Peele; we are blessed with the leadership of John Barber and our Stephen Ministers; we are blessed with the leadership of our Consistory members who have provided many hours of service on our behalf; and most importantly, we are blessed with you the members of First Reformed UCC who have supported the staff and the varied programs and projects which we have enjoyed throughout the year. It has been a year filled with hard work on the part of many and a host of meaningful worship, fellowship, learning and community service activities---the calling of our new pastor, the Commissioning of our 12 Stephen Ministers, the Community Garden project, the Blessing of the Animals, the Blessing of Prayer Shawls, the Oktoberfest, and the Mystery Dinner Theatre---just to name a few. Your participation is commendable, and especially your financial support has provided the resources needed for our church programming as well as our community outreach. At our December Consistory meeting we were assured that all Benevolences would be paid by the end of the year. We rejoice and give thanks for all God's Blessings!

At the December meeting of Consistory the officers were elected: Tom Danze, President; June Grubb, Vice President; Glenyce Fulton, Secretary; and Harriette Murphy, Treasurer. These four people also serve as the Executive Committee of Consistory and with Tom's leadership they will meet within the next few weeks to choose the Board chairpersons and help provide names for the various Boards for the year 2012, beginning January 1st. The newly elected consistory members and officers will be installed early in January. At that time the two persons named as Elder Emeriti, Joyce Price and Roy Bevan will also be recognized. *(My apologies to Roy for omitting his name in the November newsletter).*

At the end of December my tenure as President of the Consistory/Congregation will come to an end. It has been an awesome tasks and I am grateful for the support you have given to the leadership of First Reformed UCC. My hope is that we will continue to seek God's presence among us and that we will continue to Be and Do whatever we discern to be God's will as we serve others -- fellow members, and folk in the community and world.

Peace to you and a Blessed Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

You Are Needed...

As chairpersons begin to gather their committees for the New Year, it is important to make sure ALL church members are involved in the activities of our church. Time and Talent are an important part of stewardship. If you did not return a Time and Talent sheet for 2012 in November, please do so immediately. You can call the church office if you have misplaced yours; Paula can email or mail you a copy. This information is the only way we have of knowing what you are willing and wanting to participate in. Some of you may want to volunteer in new areas. Unless you provide this information, we can't assume you want to continue serving the same committee, or become involved in a new one. SPEND SOME PRAYERFUL TIME FILLING OUT A TIME AND TALENT SHEET.

WE WILL BECOME AN EVEN STRONGER CHURCH WHEN EVERYONE IS WORKING TOGETHER TO SERVE OUR GOD.

Women's Life Fellowship

Women's Life Fellowship members gathered at The Lexington Tea House for our Christmas party on Tuesday, December 6th.



Our host were great; the food was marvelous; and fellowship was outstanding. We are blessed to have this group of "sisters" to share with, work with, and fellowship together.

After the great meal we placed gifts in the center of the room and drew numbers for "Dirty Santa".

Maybe next year we should actually write down the rules ahead of time instead of making them up as we go! Everyone enjoyed this evening of fun and fellowship.

We will begin our new year with our regular monthly meeting on **Tuesday, January 17th at 7 pm** in the parlor. We usually meet the third Tuesday of the month. All women of the church are welcome!

Prayer Shawl Ministry

With the Blessing of 31 Prayer Shawls on Dec. 18th, we are pleased to start the New Year ready to minister to those who need to be wrapped in love during difficult times. But they will go quickly. So as you are sitting by the fire during the wintry months, please keep the needles clicking. If you are interested in learning to knit or crochet, please contact the church office and one of the ladies will be happy to get you started with this ministry. Get started with a simple pocket prayer or a blanket that you just cut and tie knots. Both private and group instructions can be arranged. Make this ministry one of your New Year commitments. **YOU WILL BE BLESSED!**



Men's Brotherhood

The Men's Brotherhood held their Christmas Party on December 12th at Yarbrough's Restaurant. There were 36 present to enjoy the delicious food and great company.

MEN'S BROTHERHOOD



Our next project is to serve the evening meal at the Homeless Shelter on Monday, January 9th. We will need volunteers for preparing the meal and approximately 5-6 individuals to go to the shelter and assist with serving. We will discuss the menu for the Shelter at our meeting this coming **Monday, January 2nd at 6:00 pm** in the fellowship hall. Dinner is provided. All men of the church are invited.

Stephen Ministry Update

The table below shows a summary of all the caregiver contacts made by our Stephen Ministers from July 29th through November 30, 2011.



Categories of care receivers include shut-ins, hospitalizations, deaths of congregational members and others. These 143 contacts include 46 phone calls, 66 visits, 31 others. This totals almost 102 hours in 4 months. Outstanding! We should all be proud of this new ministry now functioning in our church.

DATE	CATEGORY			TYPE OF CONTACT			MONTH TOTAL	
	SICK	SHUT-IN	OTHER	PHONE	VISITS	OTHER	CONTACTS	MINUTES SHARED
July 2011	X	X		2	4		6	280
August 2011	X	X	X	14	15		29	887
September 2011		X	X	10	10		20	463
October 2011	X	X	X	10	11	16	37	1520
November 2011	X	X	X	10	26	15	51	2940
PERIOD TO DATE TOTAL							143	6090

United Friendship Club

The United Friendship Club met on Wednesday, December 7th at 12:00 pm. Following our covered dish luncheon Chaplain Cyrus Bush provided a program of music and carols for the Season of Advent/Christmas. It was an enjoyable event on a cold and rainy day.

We will begin the new year with our meeting on Wednesday, January 25th with a covered dish luncheon, followed with a program given by Barb de Souza. Barb spent 26 years as a missionary in Brazil for Global Ministries, a joint effort with the United Church of Christ and the Disciples of Christ. She will share a video as part of her presentation which was made by her daughter and shown at the General Synod the year Barb received the Antoinette Brown Award for her work on behalf of the United Church of Christ. She is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ. Her spouse, Gus, is a native of Brazil and joined her as a lay leader in their work in a poor rural city of Minais Gerais, Brazil. Barb and Gus joined First Reformed UCC on Sunday, November 27, 2011.

Banks Shepherd will provide the devotions. The food and decorations Committee for this meeting include Joyce Price, Vicky Green, Nancy Robbins and Wanda Daye.

Everyone is invited to join us for good food and an interesting program, an opportunity to hear about the work of the United Church of Christ through Global Ministries, as Barb and Gus de Souza worked on our behalf in Brazil.





THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Because of your hard work and generosity, we were able to pay all of our budgeted benevolences for 2011. We also shared fun and fellowship, even good food and entertainment, as we worked together to accomplish this goal. During these financially struggling times, I am proud of our church and our efforts to reach out helping others in our community and beyond. God surely blessed us as we shared those blessings with others. PRAISES BE TO GOD!!!!!!

(Thanks, Paula, for the efficient handling of these monies. I just enjoyed the pleasure of signing the checks. **HARRIETTE**)

Dear Church Family,

The First Reformed UCC Staff wishes to thank all of you for your thoughtfulness and generosity during the holiday season. Your gifts of love and appreciation mean so much to all of us.


THANK YOU,
ROBIN, PAULA, CATHY, PAUL, AND LEE ANN

A huge thank you is extended to our Choir Director, Paul Freeman; Pianist, Lee Ann Peele; the choir; and the orchestra for the WONDERFUL cantata presented on Sunday, December 11th.

The "Veterans of the Cross" offering received for those clergy and their families who have served and continue to serve the United Church of Christ totaled \$600.00.

A special thank you to Janette Neal who sends cards to our church family throughout the year.

- THANK YOU NOTES FOR BENEVOLENT GIFTS WERE RECEIVED FROM THE FOLLOWING...**
- SOUTHERN CONFERENCE UCC**
 - LANCASTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**
 - LEXINGTON HOUSING CDC**
 - NAZARETH CHILDREN'S HOME**
 - UNITED CHURCH HOMES & SERVICES**
 - HOSPICE OF DAVIDSON COUNTY**
 - BLOWING ROCK CONFERENCE CENTER**
 - CRISIS MINISTRY OF DAVIDSON COUNTY**
 - DAVIDSON MEDICAL MINISTRIES**



Honorarium Gifts

PAM GARRITY

Jeffrey and Elizabeth Coats
Katherine G. Young
John and Amanda Coats



DECEMBER 2011

BRYCE AND HELEN MURDOCK

Steve and Charles Murdock

GILES CROWELL

Vicky Green

HENRY JUNIOR BECK

Janie Lohr

Sylvia and John Walser

Tony and Lee Ann Peele

Thomas and Joyce Phillips

Maxine Lohr

REVEREND MAX TUSSEY

Steve and Glory Tussey

HANK GARRITY

John and Linda Garrity

Lee and Catherine Garrity

DONALD WESTON LEONARD

Janie Lohr

Kathryn Earnhardt

Maxine Lohr

Marilyn Lohr

Dorman and Jean Hartley

Vicky Green

City of Lexington

Clark Smith

Jack and Lalah Frank

Edgar and Kivi Miller

Tom and Linda Overcash

Bob and Dawn Shaak

Sylvia and John Walser

Holton Davis

Ardell and Edna Lanier

Wanda Daye

Tony and Lee Ann Peele

Holy Angels Services

Jerry and Aurelia Smith

Chris and Renee Bradshaw

Thomas and Joyce Phillips

Jessie and Kay McCartney

ALOSSIE KNOWLES

{Lee Ann Peele's Mother}

Janie Lohr

Aurelia and Jerry Smith

Sylvia and John Walser

John and Vicky Gray

Wanda Daye

Gladys Snider

ERNESTINE KENNEDY

Merle and Jerry Hodges

Katherine Skipper

Holton Davis

Roy and Anne Bevan

Banks and Eulene Shepherd

Juanita Beck

Wanda Daye

Christian Education

Cathy Waitman, Director of Christian Education

Welcome to 2012! It is great to recall all of the exceptional things we accomplished in 2011, but even more wonderful to think about what we can accomplish in 2012.

First of all, I have some thoughts to share about Sunday night, Dec. 18th. What a magical and comical performance of the children's program! The children were great performers and provided lots of entertainment. I really enjoy working with all of the children and I truly appreciate the gift card. There are so many people to thank for their help and expertise with the program. I am afraid to mention people by name, so I will make a blanket statement. To everyone who helped with the production: costumes, set design, props, getting dressed, bringing children to practice, helping children learn lines, helping with music and cleanup, etc. - Thanks a million! The program would not be possible without your help!

Beginning this month, we would like to start an intergenerational group of prayer partners for the tweens in the Grapplers class. All that is required is: come to a short introduction session, display picture and profile of young person near your Bible and devotional materials, pray for the young person daily and do Take Five (a prayer activity), contact young person one to two times a month, and celebrate birthdays and holidays with cards, emails, etc. We would like to find seven people who are not related to the tweens who would be willing to volunteer. Please give this opportunity some thought and if you are interested, contact me in the office or by email.



The Roads to God children will begin a new rotation called "Giving and Receiving Hospitality." They will learn examples of hospitality from Jesus' interactions with people like the stories of Zacchaeus, the two loaves and five fishes, and foot washing. They will also see how Abraham welcomed his special guests. In the Two By Two class, Mrs. Nancy has exciting and fun lessons planned each Sunday. We hope to see all of the children (as well as the adults) here each Sunday morning.

There are so many ways that all of you can volunteer in our church. The prayer shawl ministry needs helpers to fold shawls, put ribbons and tags on, or to tie knots on blankets. There are always openings to lead Children's Church and Kids' Club. There are two circles for the ladies of the church and brotherhood for the men. We need people to share their spiritual journey on first Sundays. If you have not done so, please look at your time and talent sheet to consider where you could help your church family. Don't forget that there is a bulletin board outside the fellowship hall "advertising" for your help. It is sort of lonely right now, because no one is signing up. Make a special trip by the bulletin board and sign up for whatever interests you.



Let's all thank God for a new year of opportunities and blessings. If we all share in the responsibilities He has given us, our church and community will grow and experience even greater things in 2012. I am very thankful for each and every one of you and for being a part of this fantastic church family!

Sharing Spiritual Life Journeys

As you know, the first Sunday of the month all of the adult Sunday school classes meet in the chapel for a combined lesson. In the past, different classes have been responsible for the lesson. We were fortunate to have Walter Hoffman and Lisa Nelson share their spiritual life journeys during church last year and that spurred a new idea for combined Sunday lessons. Starting in January, different people will be sharing their spiritual life journeys. June Grubb has contacted several people about presenting their stories and John Barber is scheduled for January 8th. Some of the others who have been asked are Eulene Shepherd, Chris Keel, Banks Shepherd, Gladys Snider, and Birke McNeill. If you are interested in sharing your spiritual journey with the Sunday school classes, please contact June. If June contacts you, please give the idea serious consideration. We hope more of you will plan to attend First Sundays to hear these wonderful stories of spiritual life. Each of the three Sunday school classes will still be scheduled for songs and announcements.



Kids' Club (Bug Study) - January 8th and 29th

Kids' Club (Alice & James) – January 15th

Children's Church – January 22nd

Thank all of you who have visited my mom, Virginia Hill, and my stepdad, "Bunny" Hill, while they have been at Alston Brook. They appreciate your cards and prayers as well. Mom is really impressed that so many of you have shown your love and care. I am deeply appreciative for all of your good thoughts and wishes!

Cathy Waitman
Director of Christian Education

For Information, Coming Events, Important Dates check:



church website – www.frucc.org

church facebook page – www.facebook.com/firstreformeducc

bulletin board in the hallway of the education building

bulletin board outside Paula's office

JANUARY STEWARDS

Liturgist: Walter Hoffman

Ushers: Chairpersons: Ramona Yarbrough, Adena Wall and Jeff Hutchens

Captain: J.W. Bates

Ushers: Brian McKerlie, Denise Durham, Sylvia Walser

Plate Attendant: Buddy Lohr

Acolytes: Laura and Katarina Strenk

Sound Tech: James Gray

Adult Joint Sunday School: Class responsible for songs and announcements - - - Men's Bible Class

Social: Host/Hostess: Cheryl & Bill Walser, Janette Neal and John Potts

January 1st — Regular Sunday school classes.

January 8th Joint Sunday school and the Sunday school social.

Greeters:

January 1, 2012	Tom, Kathleen, Robert, Harrison, and Hannah
January 8, 2012	Lisa Freeman and Ramona Yarbrough
January 15, 2012	
January 22, 2012	Shane, Katie and Callie Decker
January 29, 2012	Lynn, Lauren, and Seth Klopp

Nursery:


January 1, 2012	Nicole and Mark Smith
January 8, 2012	Nina and Ted Smith
January 15, 2012	Shery and Chris Keel
January 22, 2012	Belinda and Eddie Yates
January 29, 2012	Betty Bates



Remember in Prayer (*Alston Brook*) Ernie Bonner (*Carolina House*) Micki Smith
 (*Piedmont Crossing*) Henry Kennedy, Rita Tussey

Annabelle Studebaker, Margot Everhart, Ronnie Durham, Sadie Bailey, Mary Crouse, Holton Davis, Juanita Beck, Willie Ruth Leonard, and Stephen & Glory Tussey. Also, remember Jimmy Grubb, Evelyn Smith, Ted Williams, Sterling Hedrick, Susan Stier, Judy Guillot, Maria Kattengell, Jules Bliss, Bunny and Virginia Hill, Ann Spivey, Connie Weichert, Sandra Fern, Randy Carter, Melvin Evans, and Paul Stevens. Please remember our men and women serving in the Armed Forces. To add a name to the prayer chain, contact Adena Wall at 249-1904 or the church office at 248-2617.

January 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:45 am Sunday School Classes 11:00 am Worship Service <i>Decorating Committee Removes Decorations immediately following worship—ALL help is appreciated!</i>	2 6:00 pm (FH) Men's Brotherhood	3	4 11 am (Parlor) Morning Glory Circle	5 5:30 pm {P} YOGA CLASS	6 	7
8 9:45 am Joint Sunday School 10:20 am Sunday School Social 11 am WORSHIP, HOLY COMMUNION & ORDINATION/INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS 6 pm Consistory Meeting	9 Men's Brotherhood Serving Meal at Shelter 6:30 pm (New Way Class) Bd of Christian Ed 6:30 pm (Parlor) Stephen Ministry	10 6:30 pm (Parlor) Board of Evangelism	11 7:00 pm CHOIR PRACTICE	12 5:00 pm (Parlor) TRUSTEE MEETING 5:30 pm {Downstairs} YOGA CLASS	13	14
15 9:45 am Sunday School Classes 11:00 am Worship Service and Kids' Club	16 7 pm (FH) Genealogical Society Meeting	17 2 pm (Parlor) Meals on Wheels Board Meeting 7 pm (Parlor) Women's Life Fellowship	18 7:00 pm CHOIR PRACTICE	19 5:30 pm {P} YOGA CLASS	20	21
22 9:45 am Sunday School Classes 11:00 am Worship Service and Children's Church	23 6:30 pm (Parlor) Stephen Ministry	24 10 am (Parlor) SPIRITUALITY CLASS	25 Noon (FH) FRIENDSHIP CLUB 7:00 pm CHOIR PRACTICE	26 7 pm (Parlor) SPIRITUALITY CLASS 5:30 pm {P} YOGA CLASS	27	28
29 9:45 am Sunday School Classes 11:00 am Worship Service and Kids' Club	30	31 10 am (Parlor) SPIRITUALITY CLASS	FEBRUARY 5, 2012 SOUP AND SANDWICH LUNCH AND CONGREGATIONAL MEETING			

Service of Worship and Holy Communion

Ordination/Installation of 2012 Consistory Members

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8, 2012

Elders and Deacons joining the Consistory in 2012 will be ordained/installed during the eleven o'clock worship service.



Elders: Tom Danze, Sauni Johnson, Myra Thompson
Deacons: James Atkinson, Betty Barr, Anne Fletcher
Trustee: Steve Smith

First News

First Reformed United Church of Christ
104 East Center Street
Lexington, NC 27292
Church Office: 336-248-2617
Email: church@frucc.org
Website: www.frucc.org



Join Us on Facebook:
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Return Service Requested

CHURCH STAFF

Minister.....Reverend Robin Keating
Email: minister@frucc.org, cell #336-250-9554
Director of Christian Education..... Cathy Waitman
Administrative Asst..... Paula Lopp
Choir Director Paul Freeman
Organist..... Lee Ann Peele

SUNDAY SERVICES

Sunday School.....9:45 a.m.
Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Lexington, NC 27292
Permit #168