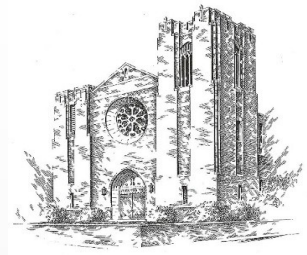


# First News

First Reformed United Church of Christ, Lexington, North Carolina



September 2010

## Grace and Gratitude



Make no mistake about it. The “attitude of gratitude” is a choice, always. It is not merely a choice now and then, or even a good bit of the time: *it is always a choice*, even in the midst of apparently prevailing troubles, tribulations and transitions. This point is so important that Henri Nouwen himself commends gratitude as a *discipline* to be lived throughout life:

1. *“In the past I always thought of gratitude as a spontaneous response to the awareness of gifts received, but now I realize that gratitude can also be lived as a discipline. The discipline of gratitude is the explicit effort to acknowledge that all I am and have is given to me as a gift of love, a gift to be celebrated with joy. Gratitude as a discipline involves a conscious choice. I can choose to be grateful even when my emotions and feelings are still steeped in hurt and resentment. It is amazing how many occasions present themselves in which I can choose gratitude instead of a complaint. ... The choice for gratitude rarely comes without some real effort. But each time I make it, the next choice is a little easier, a little freer, a little less self-conscious.”* --Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 85-86.

I choose here as well to remind you of a Karl Barth quotation that I shared on pages 2 and 3 of our April 2008 edition of *First News*, a quotation embedded within an opening essay to this congregation which I entitled “An Expression of Interim Pastoral Gratitude and Appreciation.” It states:

2. *“Grace and gratitude belong together like heaven and earth. Grace evokes gratitude like the voice an echo. Gratitude follows grace like thunder lightning...(We) are speaking of the grace of God who is God for us, and of the gratitude of humankind as our response to this grace. Here, at any rate, the two belong together, so that only gratitude can correspond to grace, and this correspondence cannot fail. Its failure, ingratitude, is sin, transgression. Radically and basically all sin is simply ingratitude—human refusal of the one but necessary thing which is proper to and is required of those with whom God has graciously entered into covenant. As far as we are concerned there can be no question of anything but gratitude; but gratitude is the complement which we must necessarily fulfill.”* --Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV/1* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1956), pp. 41-42.

The first quotation comes now as we approach the conclusion of our Intentional Interim Covenant. The second quotation appeared at its inauguration, and now again as a powerful reminder of the indissoluble bond between God’s grace and our gratitude, the latter itself being a reflection and expression of the former. Gratitude is derivative upon grace; ingratitude is derivative upon sin, rebellion, a haughty spirit, a desire to go one’s own way, whatever the cost. Ingratitude is, also, I believe, rooted in a certain perverse forgetfulness, a willful distortion of precious, collective memory. So, it seems that disciplined gratitude is, among other things, a choice for an intentional remembrance of things past, an appreciative inquiry into the evidences of grace that permeate our past, our present, and promise as well to help shape our future. Fortunately for us, there is much for which we should all be grateful, in memory and in hope, and there is abundant good will to bring such things to mind and to celebrate them in the spirit of joy that attends all authentic gratitude.

## Our Gratitude to Healthy Congregations and to the Center for Congregational Health

However, before getting into the particulars of our grateful remembrance of things past, I would remind us that—over the some thirty-plus years of careful research that created the Intentional Interim agenda that we as a Transition Team followed so carefully, for the most part—all of those instruments, guidelines, studies, exercises and insights which we applied to our own situation **were based upon the collective experience of well-adjusted, healthy congregations**. While it is true that sometimes we do speak of the IIM approach as a recommended course of action for congregations which are experiencing difficulty, we need to remember that **this intentional approach wells up out of the collective experience of hundreds of congregations, from many denominations, which were functioning effectively, by God's grace and by their gratitude for that grace**. Hence, the IIM approach to a congregation in pastoral transition may apply effectively to a congregation which is in fact “doing well,” but may just need to fine-tune a few approaches to ministry or to become more self-aware about the kind of minister that is most appropriate for an emerging, new situation, without necessarily presuming a problematic past. However, if a congregation's life has become problematic, to itself as well as to seasoned observers, then the IIM approach is recommended primarily because **it will constrain the congregation towards chosen, disciplined “normalcy,” namely what “normalcy” means for them when they are fully open to God's guiding Spirit, again, with an open spirit of presiding gratitude for that grace**.

So it is appropriate, then, for those of us who are emerging from a largely successful Intentional Interim Ministry to express our gratitude for all of those anonymous (to us) Christian congregations, across the denominational spectrum, which have become our teachers and guides during an important transition time. It is also important to express our gratitude for the dedicated clergy and lay leaders from such organizations as the Center for Congregational Health who equip people like me to do what I do within the local church. We are also grateful for the leadership of our ACM, the Rev. Larry Walser, and for our local FRUCC leaders and the 2008 Consistory who loved this congregation enough to risk an IIM approach to the present pastoral transition which was mostly unfamiliar to this congregation. God works in such mysterious, pervasive ways among us as flawed human beings that it requires a lifetime to tease some of those ways to our conscious awareness, but perhaps that little miracle is happening among us, now.

### Our Gratitude Highlighted

Pursuant to this end, we begin by expressing our appreciation to **Kivi Miller, Myra Thompson** and to all those kindred spirits here who recognized the importance of implementing major upgrades in our FRUCC website capability, so much so that *if you will simply “Google” First Reformed United Church of Christ, Lexington, NC, you will have at your fingertips (DOWNLOADS) all of our editions of First News, starting with April, 2008, and continuing to the present*. (Copies of former bulletins are available as well). I myself have made hard copies (about 110 copies by my estimation) recently of the relevant IIM sections of all our newsletters since my arrival to jog my own memory about the remarkable accomplishments that we have been guided to by the spirit to implement. A related exercise discloses that we generated well over 200 key documents during the course of the Transition Team's work, thanks, in part, to the meticulous sets of minutes which **Anne Fletcher** provided. Other relevant documents involved “Pastor's Notes” pieces, letters, position statements for in-house TT use, essays, devotional pieces, liturgies for related worship services, assembly agendas, email correspondence, etc., all of which I “word processed”—to construct a verb that has replaced “typed,” it seems. This strategy kept a promise I made to **Paula Lopp** that our TT functioning would not overwhelm her already overloaded schedule—the two exceptions being when she edited/spaced the above mentioned word processed IIM documents for *First News* purposes and when she prepared letterhead stationery for the TT's correspondence, doing some mailing and copying for us on occasion, as well. While we have made a serious, sustained effort to “protect” Paula from dealing with extra documents, we do not wish to minimize her key role in helping us all stay in touch with one another, taking IIM related calls, passing on messages and such. Paula, once again, has proven to be a vital, pivotal asset to the life at FRUCC, and for all the above mentioned people, we are indeed very grateful!

Because, by design, I have attempted to make it easy for any of you to use our new website and former newsletters and bulletins to consult in detail our Intentional Interim Ministry “history” here (noting as well that Consistories present and future may consult the extensive IIM records that were generated by our Transition Team), I will just point here to some IIM initiatives which have engaged the vital strength and faithfulness of the FRUCC membership.

Notice that as we are concluding our IIM with an emphasis on grace and gratitude, we remember that with the **April, 2008 FN, pp. 2 and 3**, we began in gratitude. We were off to a great start in **May**, assembling quickly our diverse TT with your wise congregational assistance and balloting, stating TT purposes and objectives (pp. 1-3). We conducted our first TT meeting in **June** and began grappling with the "Coming to Terms with History" sheet that so many of you have now completed, utilizing the "African Bible Study" format and including as well the remarkable devotional by my former teacher, Prof. Charles Robinson, titled "Known" (pp. 1-4). (If you have forgotten this, check it out again!) Your TT was absolutely committed to making progress in **July**, normally one of the quiet months in a congregation's life, so we conducted several meetings with virtually everyone present, exploring how we were going to create a safe place within which we could share problematic "truths," reminding ourselves that in any difficult discussion, "everyone has a piece of the confusion and everyone has a piece of the truth." (pp. 1-2) In **August, 2008**, I wrote an essay I called "The Contrite Heart" (p. 1), to which many of you responded appreciatively, as we were engaging our "healing services" during worship with "Christianity 101: Forgiveness and Reconciliation." Somewhere along in this time period, I presented a new, "rotation station" approach to Sunday School to our Board of Christian Education, to which **Amy McNeill, Alice Gray & the Board** responded enthusiastically, creating what we came to call "New Look," with a new curriculum we came to call "Roads to God." We cannot begin to thank sufficiently our Consistory and Property Committee and the people who just love fixing stuff up who came together to tackle the major renovations that were required downstairs in the Educational Building (not to mention the Fellowship Hall and other major updates), as well as our dedicated Sunday School teachers and the present, on-going leadership of **Cathy Waitman**, our Interim DCE. During **September, 2008**, we also connected Rally Day with Homecoming, which had not been observed in a while. We also conducted our first Assembly with the TT and the congregation on Sunday, September 21 (p. 3). Recall as well that the Corner Café Dinner Theatre pounded the planks on September 27, directed by **Carolyn Spivey** and sponsored by the Women's Fellowship. (Note: A new version of this production is in the works, scheduled for Saturday, October 16, a forerunner for what may be an emerging new set of approaches to the raising of benevolence funds.) The **October, 2008** Pastor's Notes expressed thanksgiving for the above events and looked toward our congregational stewardship challenges as they developed amidst the growing national and global financial crisis; reading this statement some two years later is sobering, but I stand by what I said then as still being relevant to FRUCC's stewardship challenges (pp. 2-3). Our **November** FN focused upon the passing of C.H. Bates (p. 1-2), a great loss among many such losses on my watch here. We remain immensely grateful for their memory and service to FRUCC. Our indefatigable Amy McNeill wrote a great piece about how "New Look" was coming along (p. 8). In **December, 2008**, I asked our TT members to share with you in their own words what it meant to them to be on the IIM Team; their responses were thought-provoking (pp. 2-4).

In **January of 2009**, I reflected on the predictable subject of New Year's resolutions, with a focus on John the Baptist, Dr. Samuel Johnson and the subject of "forgiveness," a favorite IIM theme of mine (pp 1-2). We also found space for **Walter Hoffman's** response to an earlier question, "Thoughts of a Transition Team Member" (p. 2). Our TT was ready for another Assembly in **February, 2009** (p. 1-2), preparing to acquaint you with the "*Pastoral Leadership Expectations Sample Survey*" (pp. 3-4), a "forced choice" instrument of 12 out of a possible 42 pastoral qualities which you thought were most suitable for your next permanent pastor. This exercise was also designed to assist your Search Committee in the preparation of the congregation's UCC Profile. I also wanted to inform you of the work we had been doing to edit our governing church documents, particularly the *Constitutional By-Laws* (which, by the way, will be up for ratification on Sunday, October 10, 2010) and the work necessary to create a new church committee, the *Pastor/Parish Relations Committee* (which will also be up for your approval or disapproval on October 10 of this year.) The **March, 2009** Pastor's Notes was simply a refinement upon what had gone before concerning the Assembly that was to take place Sunday afternoon (March 22) concerning desirable pastoral qualities. Pages 2 and 3 were all about "The Shack," which was to be the substance of our Lenten Study at that time. We averaged over sixty persons an evening for all the Tuesdays in March, including April 7 of Holy Week, which was a gratifying response. Our **April, 2009** FN (pp. 1-4) reported the results of our March 22 Assembly on "Pastoral Qualities," a very detailed report which I believe was of use to the Search Committee in their work. Our **May, 2009** FN offered a compressed report on the "Dreams and Visions" Sheet that also received attention at the March 22 Assembly; if you have forgotten some of that material, you might want to review it (pp. 1-2), along with the brief synopsis of our previous report on pastoral qualities (p. 3), which conveniently places all of the identified qualities on one sheet for easy comparison, from greatest to least, with a cluster of qualities at the bottom which may, in my view, be more important than its ranking seems to suggest. In **June, 2009**, we announced a new summer schedule for worship, with 9:30 a.m. for Sunday School and 10:30 a.m. for worship, which worked reasonably well; though, I noticed that no one really brought it up again for this summer, now swiftly fleeting away! We have added 21 new members to our roles since my arrival, and two of our then newest members, **Chris and Amanda Fulton**, figured prominently in our Consistory

Highlights section of our June FN with a reference to the June 14 week for the *Lexington Housing Community Development Corporation* to host their group work camp, involving some 420 young people & their advisors from all over the country to repair 70 homes for the needy. (Indeed, we hosted here at FRUCC a smaller version of this same vision when some 35 young people and their advisors stayed in our Educational Building during mid-July, offering Bible School classes as well as repairs for the needy.) Our **July 2009** FN noted the last official meeting of the TT on June 22, 2009 (p. 1), which triggered the Consistory to notify the Search Committee that they were ready to begin their work with our ACM, the **Rev. Larry Walser**, a Committee that had been selected well before my arrival. We incorporated the dissolution of the TT, with our appreciation and thanksgiving for their work, at a subsequent worship service, where most of them were present. Pages 2 through 4 of this FN shared thoughtful essays from TT members under the heading, "What I've Learned About Teamwork and How it Applies to This Church." The **August, 2009** FN carried both an update on the immediately preceding TT report and another one with the title, "What Are Your Goals and Vision for our Church at the One, Three, and Five Year Markers?" (pp. 2-7). Page 8 contained an informative overview from **Search Chair Dawn Shaak** of the Search and Call Process in the UCC, advising everyone accurately that the average search requires about one to one-and-a-half years.

This result brings us up to **September, 2009**, one year ago. Present space constraints really do not permit me to continue the month-to-month patterns of presentation as I have just done, though all of the relevant materials are at your disposal. In any case, the formal TT phase of my IIM work here was completed, though there was still considerable work to do to prepare FRUCC for her future with her new permanent pastor. **1)** The September, 2009 Pastor's Notes do state one of the visions that I felt was necessary for such long-term preparation, one which I received Consistory permission to pursue: **the formation of an ecumenically-based Community Youth Group, planned specifically for the needs of the traditional junior/senior high youth groupings, from 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.** I continue to appreciate the insights, in no particular order, of **Betty Barr, Peyton Barr, Alice Gray, Chris and Amanda Fulton, Amy McNeill, and Bill and Cheryl Walser**, who met with me at 5:00 p.m. Monday, August 24, for our first real brain-storming session as to how we would go about creating and supporting an ecumenically-based youth group, identifying congregations like FRUCC who simply did not have enough young people to sustain such a group on their own, and making common cause with them. Now, a year later, this noble experiment continues, though with Amanda now in the family way, we will need to ask other people to step in to assist with our portion of the leadership responsibilities. **2)** The September 2009 FN, on page 5, within the Search Committee Update, refers to the sensitive task they had of **assessing and trimming our active/inactive membership rolls.** At their request, I was glad to write rough draft documents which they edited and refined to their purposes, allowing us to discharge that important task without alienating anyone, to the best of our knowledge—all the while preparing a more accurate, realistic membership roll and congregational Profile. They are to be commended for tackling that generally touchy subject which many Search Committees deflect. **3)** I was very pleased to **moderate the 21 session "Living the Questions" series**, the first 7 sessions of which took place beginning October 1, with the last 14 taking place this year, 2010. The overall emphasis of this superb series was upon the **spiritual life as a journey**, and I cannot say enough by way of appreciation for all of you who took that journey with us. **4)** It was my honor to lead 11 of our members to the Saturday, November 14, 2009 **Stephen Ministry Workshop, at St. James Presbyterian Church, Greensboro, NC.** As most of you now know, out of that modest beginning, we now have a trained lay Stephen Minister in the person of **John Barber**, who is as authentically enthusiastic about this lay ministry as anyone I have ever seen! There are absolutely incredible possibilities within this approach to lay ministry which will sensitize even further an already compassionate congregation, creating new possibilities for service within our community and, by the way, attractions for potentially new members, for many people have joined congregations upon learning that they sponsor a Stephen Ministry! Really! **5)** It was a great delight to secure the **Madrigal Singers from Grimsley High School in Greensboro** to perform here on the first Sunday evening in Advent, November 29, 2009. It is equally my pleasure to inform you that plans have been made for them to return for the first Sunday in Advent, November 28 of this year. As always, we express our appreciation to the **Arthur and Maggie Thomason Endowment and to Marguerite Leonard** for making such events possible, not only for FRUCC, but for the entire community.

I trust that I close these comments with grace and gratitude, for I feel very fortunate to have served with such a compassionate, sensitive congregation that does indeed have the love of Jesus Christ at its heart. From the very beginning of our IIM experience together, I could see flashes of hope, a keen desire to heal and to move forward, a deep respect for one another, even in diversity, the keen focus and drive of the TT itself, so much so that positive initiatives started welling up almost immediately, as with the Dinner Theater experience in 2008, before we were anywhere near through. I do believe that the challenges that brought me here initially have been settled, thoroughly, and that the "normalcy" of which I spoke earlier has already begun and bids fair to mature ever more completely with your new pastoral partner, your new permanent minister, *Deo volente.*

*Blessings and Shalom, Rev. Walt*

# Consistory Highlights

**Financial Report:** Harriette Murphy distributed copies of the treasurer's report for July to all members. The average weekly offering for the month of July was \$4,536. General Fund balance \$29,263; designated funds total \$28,010, putting available funds at \$1,253. The building fund balance is \$27,583; and music fund is \$5,965.

**Pastor's Report:** Reverend Patten handed out his 6-week report from June 28, 2010 to August 8, 2010. The report showed 98 phone calls, 16 hospital/rehab/Rest home visits, 55 office meetings and approximately 44 hours work per week. Total number of people assisted by Pastor's Discretionary Fund since 4/15/08 was 188 with a balance in the account of \$768.49.

**Board of Christian Education:** Report was given by Chairperson Nancy Robbins.

- Work Camp was a success with many positive comments received.
- Rally Day and Kid's Club are scheduled for September 12. "Dig Into the Bible" and kick off for Roads to God requires a great deal of planning and preparation with a wish for more participation.
- Children's Church first meeting is September 26 and will be continuing with "Fruits of the Spirit". There is a need for several leaders for various groups.
- The Christmas Program has been set for Sunday, December 19, 2010.

Our Director of Christian Education, Cathy Waitman, has drafted and mailed a letter to the congregation requesting volunteers for various support positions within the field of Christian education.

**Congregational Life:** Thanks to Lena & Rich Johnson and Sylvia & John Walser for the Sunday Social on July 4<sup>th</sup>; and Mary Jo Jessup & Beth Callicutt for the Sunday Social August 1<sup>st</sup>. Thanks to everyone who assisted with the Youth Work Camp during the week of July 11<sup>th</sup> and Closing Dinner for the Congregation and Youth Work Camp participants on July 16<sup>th</sup>. Upcoming Events: Friendship Club and Congregation Ice Cream Social on August 25, 2010. Rally Day on September 12, 2010.

**Board of Business Management and Stewardship:** Chairpersons John Smith, Stewardship, and Mike Brown, Property, reported:

- Details for the dinner/play for Saturday, October 16, 2010 were presented. Tickets will be \$30.00. Carolyn Spivey is leading and directing the production. Volunteers for the kitchen and wait help are needed. The main course will consist of rib-eye steak.
- As of now, the budget is a rough draft that will need more discussion. Also everyone will be informed of the next meeting.
- John Barber has audited every month in 2010 up through June 30, 2010 and has found no inaccuracies, improprieties, or breaches of internal controls that are in effect at the church.
- Property Committee Chairperson, Mike Brown, reported an estimate of \$3,000.00 is needed to repair the parapet wall of the education building (Editor's note: actual cost is \$10,200). It was motioned by Sylvia Walser and seconded by John Smith. It was approved unanimously. Also, the Chamber of Commerce approached the Property Committee about painting the sides of the chamber building. The Chamber and Lexington Housing Community Development Corporation (tenants) are using grant money to upgrade the front and back of the building. The estimate to paint both sides is \$15,000.00 (Editor's note: actual cost is \$7,500). Motioned by Sylvia Walser and seconded by Eddie Yates to approve this project. It was also proposed that the facilities' rent be increased. This includes the sanctuary, fellowship hall, and kitchen. The new amounts will begin immediately with anyone wishing to use our facilities. Groups already on the calendar are grandfathered in at the current rate. A motion was made by Jeff Hutchens, and seconded by Tom Danze.

**Board of Community Outreach:** Edgar Miller, Chairperson reported: A training session for the Sunday Lunch Program for the Homeless was held on July 28<sup>th</sup> at Grace Episcopal Church. Kathleen Danze attended and will be coordinating our involvement.

## **Evangelism Board:**

Janette Neal reported that the average attendance for the month of June was 113, and the month of July was 95. As of the end of July, membership remains at 324.

## **Nominating Committee:**

Sylvia Walser, Nominating Committee Chairperson, asked for clarity on rules for nominating someone who had served as a deacon or elder in another United Church of Christ congregation. Can that person be nominated as an elder in our church? After discussion Sylvia moved that if a person was a member in good standing in our church for one year and had previously served as a deacon in another UCC church; then he/she would qualify to be nominated as an elder at First Reformed United Church of Christ. Tom Danze seconded the motion and all approved. This change will be added to the other by-law changes/corrections that will be presented to the congregation for a vote at our congregational meeting on Sunday, October 10, 2010.

# CONSISTORY

**O** *By: June Grubb, Consistory President*

**R** Last Sunday in a round table discussion with members of the Finance Committee and Consistory we responded to five questions related to the development of the 2011 Proposed Budget for our congregation. This was a very positive and informative way to hear from a larger segment of the congregation as the Finance Committee continues its work of budget planning. I believe it was time well spent as we shared our priorities and concerns for the mission and work of First Reformed United Church of Christ. For those who were not able to attend this dialogue session, I will share the five questions which guided our discussions and some of our responses.

**E** 1. What does our church spend money on that you find rewarding?

**R** Responses included: Local benevolences i.e., Crisis Ministries; Children's programs; Youth Ministry; Meals on Wheels; Music Ministry; Building and Grounds supervised by our Property Committee; the beginning of Stephen Ministries; Pastor's Discretionary Fund; Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM). ***"Every penny we spend to help others is rewarding!"***

2. What are other ways/ideas we can support the budget?

Responses included: Adopting Benevolences among classes, groups, within the church; Fundraisers i.e. BBQ Festival parking, bake sales, Saturday morning Breakfasts, Rummage/Yard Sale, Auction Services and goods, Church Dinner/Entertainment; Fifth Sunday special offering in addition to regular offering designated for benevolences; commit to giving on a regular basis; Contribute Volunteer time to support local benevolences.

3. What percent of the budget should be dedicated to benevolences and how should we prioritize?

Responses included: At least maintain our present percentage of 17%; 17% to 20%. Prioritize on basis of basic human needs, i.e. food, shelter, health care; reallocate benevolences to meet the priority of basic human needs; fund on the basis of the question, "Which agency benefits the most people?"; Suspend for the present, contributions to endowments at Catawba College, Elon University, Lancaster Theological Seminary. ***"The church exists to give itself away!"***

4. How can we improve the Stewardship process?

Responses: First, define the process; encourage tithing; have a stewardship moment in worship on a monthly basis; pray, visit, ask people to give; do more with time and talent responses; honor offertory pledges to be able to inform members of what they are doing; look at long term sustainability, i.e. 2015; encourage more donations of material goods.

5. In what ways other than money should we support our budget and community?

Responses: Community Garden; Time and talent; in-home dinners, birthday dinners, progressive dinner parties; Stephen Ministries, Prayer Shawl/Quilt Ministry; Food and clothes closet; "Touching Davidson County with Love" project; provide facilities for community events; more volunteers in various areas. ***"Church is not a spectator sport!"***

My thanks for the more than 60 people who participated in this round table discussion. If you were not present, I hope that you will reflect on the various responses given by members of our congregation and add your thoughts and ideas to the mix.

May our prayers continue to be with the Finance Committee and the Consistory as they faithfully develop the Proposed 2011 budget for First Reformed United Church of Christ, which we will be asked to adopt at our congregational annual meeting on Sunday, October 10, 2010.

# Stephen Ministry

Our Stephen Ministry Leadership Team has been formed and is diligently working to implement this Lay Ministry in our church. The team members are as follows:

Trained Stephen Leader	John Barber
Minister of New Friendship UCC	Cyndi Burns
Co-Chair Evangelism Committee	Dave Fulton
President of Consistory	June Grubb
Co Chair Evangelism Committee	Janette Neal

Walter Patten will also serve on this team for the duration of his contract. When we get a new minister, we will ask that person to also serve on the team.

Cyndi Burns is a trained Stephen Minister and Stephen Leader and has over 7 years of experience in the ministry that exists at her former church. Her experience will be invaluable.

One of the most important elements of a Stephen Ministry is a strong dedicated Leadership Team. Yours is that!!

The process being used to implement Stephen Ministry in our church is called the Stephen Series. It consists of ten steps that will be followed in the order they are listed in the table below. The table also shows the current status of each step and will be updated periodically every time something in the status column changes.

Task	Status
Build A Stephen Leader Team	Completed
Establish Values, Vision, System, and Plan	In Process
Build Awareness And Ownership	In Process ( <b>Never Ends</b> )
Recruit And Select Stephen Ministers	
Train Stephen Ministers	
Commission Stephen Leaders And Stephen Ministers	
Make Referrals To Stephen Ministers	
Supervise Stephen Ministers	
Affirm Stephen Leaders And Stephen Ministers	
Evaluate And Improve Your Stephen Ministry	

## Search Committee Update

We hope all of you have had a fun, relaxing summer. Your Search Committee has continued to meet, visit, and listen to sermons. We know you are eager to see your search end, welcome a new minister, and move forward. We are energized by the profiles we have retained. We feel that if anyone of these ministers should accept your call, First Reformed UCC will grow stronger in serving God, serving you, you serving the church, and our community will be richer as they make Lexington their home.



Thank you for your prayerful support, your enduring patience, and your trust to see this search well done.

### Search Committee Members:

**Dawn Shaak**, Chairperson

**Eulene Shepherd**, Chaplain

**Sauni Johnson**

**Mark Smith**, Vice Chairperson

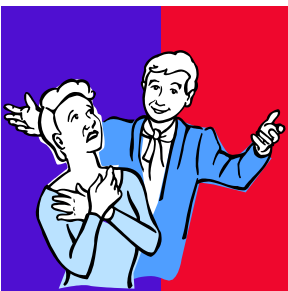
**Vicky Gray**

**Birke McNeill**

**Clifford Lopp**, Recording Secretary

**Walter Hoffman**

**Tony Peele**

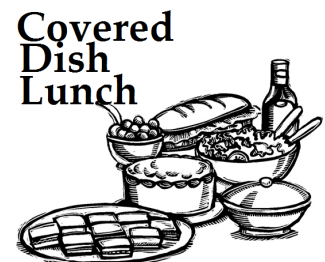


The Finance Committee of First Reformed United Church of Christ is sponsoring a fundraiser on Saturday, October 16th that you will not want to miss. The Corner Café Dinner Theatre is presenting *Mother Goose's Grim Tales (Definitely Not for Little Children.)* Even if you attended the last presentation, you will still be guessing "who done it?". Some of the play has been rewritten and the characters will be portrayed by different actors/actresses. Tickets will go on sale soon!

## United Friendship Club

The United Friendship Club will begin their new year of fellowship with a covered dish luncheon at noon on Wednesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Peggy Grimes will have devotions and Lib Sink will share with the group a program entitled "Come to a Special Church".

The food and decoration committee for this meeting are Jo and John Hudson, June Grubb and Howard Wall.



## Women's Life Fellowship

Women's Life Fellowship kicked off the new season with a picnic at the home of Carolyn Spivey. Everyone brought a covered dish which provided a wide variety of tasty goodies. Special thanks to Carolyn for opening her home and for being the exceptional hostess she always is.

After our delicious meal Mary Jo Jessup showed us two examples, one knitted and one crocheted, of the type of prayer shawls that are to be made for a project sponsored by our Board of Evangelism. Several of the ladies expressed an interest in participating in this project. It was decided that Mary Jo will let members know the materials needed and will spend a little time at our next meeting showing those who would like to know, how to create a shawl. If you do not have the time, or are not interested in learning how to make a prayer shawl, all donations for materials will be appreciated. This is a church wide project.

Women's Life Fellowship fed the Lexington Senior High School football team Friday night, August 20<sup>th</sup>. It was short notice; however, as always our ladies stepped up to bat. Beth Callicutt headed the project. Mike Brown and John Potts grilled chicken breasts, and eight ladies prepared mac-n-cheese recipes. Green beans were prepared at the church. Belinda Yates, along with Eddie's assistance, made a HUGE banana pudding.

Several items for assistance were presented. We voted to:

- ◆ Assist the Nazareth Children's Home back-to-school program with \$100.00
- ◆ Give \$200.00 to the Community Youth Group (based at First Reformed UCC) to assist with their "back-to-school" retreat to Johns River Valley Camp the last weekend of August.
- ◆ Give \$400.00 to Blowing Rock Conference Center for the purchase of ceiling fans for the building used by our participants at the Blowing Rock Retreat.
- ◆ Donate \$1,000.00 toward benevolences listed on the First Reformed UCC budget

Belinda Yates thanked all those who helped in any way with assisting in preparing and serving work camp participants. Cathy Waitman also extended thanks to those who assisted with the work camp Bible school.

New officers elected are:

President:	Beth Callicutt
Vice President:	Paula Lopp
Corresponding Secretary:	Janette Neal
Treasurer:	Belinda Yates

Our next meeting is Tuesday, September 21<sup>st</sup> at 7 p.m. We will be breaking into our groups to discuss projects for the coming year. Also, Mary Jo will give us a lesson on creating prayer shawls.

## Men's Brotherhood

The Men's Brotherhood will kick off their new year on Thursday, September 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall. A meal will be provided. Frank Cagle, United Way Chairman, will be our guest speaker. This is a great way to meet and learn the people of our church. All men are invited to join us. Let's start our year on a high note as we continue to grow as a church and group.

# Christian Education

*Cathy Waitman, Interim Director of Christian Education*

## **You Are Invited to Rally Day Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup> Downstairs at 9:45 a.m.**

We will be meeting downstairs at 9:45 for a brief program, presentation of certificates and Bibles for the children, and recognition of the teachers. There will be a preview of the Roads to God fall program, "Dig Into the Bible," where you can see the activities the school age children will be doing for the next eight weeks. The classrooms - Storytelling/Video, Art/Science. Computers/Music, and Cooking/Games - will all be decorated and ready for the children. If you have not been here in a while, you will be amazed at the transformation in the downstairs classrooms. We would like for you to come and join us for the Rally Day festivities. A catered meal will be in the fellowship hall following the worship service.



Teachers for the fall rotation of "Dig Into the Bible" will be Raeann Biesecker, Alice Gray, Keri Hartle, Heidi Hutcheson, Amy McNeill, Kivi Miller, Nicole Smith, and Nina Smith. I really appreciate all the volunteers who have taught Roads to God classes this year. The program does not work without all of the people who teach or the children who attend.

The adult classes – Men's Bible, Willing Workers, Seekers, and New Way - would like to invite you to join one of our classes for Sunday school. Starting September 19<sup>th</sup>, John Barber will begin a series of lessons on the Stephen Ministry in the New Way class. If you are interested in hearing about this Christian care-giving ministry, make plans to attend each Sunday morning. The Willing Workers will soon be starting a series on the New Testament with an emphasis on Matthew. The men will continue using The Present Word material.

I want to thank all of the ladies who have been volunteering in the nursery for Sunday School – Jessica Bentley, Lynn Brown, Amanda Fulton, Glenyce Fulton, Heidi Hutcheson, Mary Jo Jessup, Paula Lopp, Amy McNeill, Harriette Murphy, Aurelia Smith, Sylvia Walser and Belinda Yates. Starting September 19, Katie Decker and Ashlee Lopp will be keeping the nursery during Sunday School. Lynn Brown will be working with Nancy Robbins in the Two By Two class.



Plans are also in the works for a fun night out, sponsored by members of the New Way Class. The class is planning to use funds to assist with budgeted benevolences. Watch for more details.

There are plenty of empty seats in any of the Sunday school classes. It would be great to need more chairs so everyone would have a seat. We would love to see you here, especially if you have fallen out of the habit of attending Sunday school. We need each and every one of you to continue our community outreach and church programs.



## Kids' Club

Kids' Club resumes on Tuesday, September 21 at 7p.m. All children ages 4 years through fifth grade are invited. Be prepared to discuss, sample, and be creative with God's "fast food."

*Alice and James Gray*

## Community Youth

The youth celebrated the beginning of a new year by heading to John's River Valley Camp for a "Back to School Retreat" the last weekend of August. We enjoyed fun, fellowship, and relaxation as we looked ahead into the fall. There are many plans brewing already so we hope you're as excited as we are about what's to come for our group.

### Going forward:

September - 12<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>- Youth meet at First Reformed UCC

October - 10<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>- Youth meet at Reeds UMC Youth House

### Service Project:

**Saturday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>**- Service project- Please put this date on your calendars! More information will follow!

Preliminary plans are underway for a workcamp NEXT SUMMER! At our last meeting, we sent home literature about the venues of the workcamps and asked the kids to discuss this with their parents. We are hoping to go sometime in late July 2011. Here is a link for more information:

<http://www.groupworkcamps.com/Workcamps/Documents/Final%20Brochure%202.pdf>

Chris and I appreciate your continued support and prayers for this important ministry in our church. We have an AWESOME group of young people and anticipate with excitement what this year will bring!

*Chris and Amanda Fulton*

## **Sunday School Perfect Attendance, August 2010**

Jo Hudson	Adena Wall	Ramona Yarbrough	Nancy Robbins
Elizabeth Sink	John Barber	Earlie Hartley	Don Leonard
Cliff Lopp	John Potts	Eddie Yates	Doug Sink
Ron Hutcheson	Heidi Hutcheson	Paula Lopp	Camille Morgan
Cathy Waitman			

# August 2010 Memorials

## DINA ROBERTS

{Sauni Johnson's Sister}

- Roy and Anne Bevan
- Lynn Klopp
- Nancy Robbins
- Wanda Daye



## JEANNE TREXLER

- Wanda Daye
- Stanley and Teresa McConnell Gray
- Randy and Brenda Hedrick
- Nancy Robbins
- Carlos E. Prado, Jr.
- Cliff and Eloise Lopp

## JEAN BROYLES

{Bonita Hooper's Mother}

- |                        |                         |                            |
|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Merle and Jerry Hodges | Katherine Skipper       | Nancy Robbins              |
| Butch Bouchard         | Frank C. Leonard, Jr.   | Cliff and Eloise Lopp      |
| Doris Frye             | Aurelia and Jerry Smith | Camille Morgan             |
| Cathy Waitman          | Janie Lohr              | Carolyn and Carroll Spivey |
| Gerry Hill             |                         |                            |

## MARY RHODES

- |   |                           |                        |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Merle and Jerry Hodges                  | Katherine Skipper         | Henry and Juanita Beck |
| Don Leonard                             | John and Vicky Gray       | Elizabeth Sink         |
| Frank C. Leonard, Jr.                   | Steve and Charlotte Smith | Roy and Anne Bevan     |
| Wanda Daye                              | Cliff and Eloise Lopp     | Doris Frye             |
| Aurelia and Jerry Smith                 | Marguerite Leonard        | Bob and Dawn Shaak     |
| Maxine Lohr                             | Gladys Snider             | Holton Davis           |
| Janie Lohr                              | Banks and Eulene Shepherd |                        |
| Helen, Randy, Ronald, and Rodney Autrey |                           |                        |

## CATHERINE LEONARD

- |                        |                       |                         |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Merle and Jerry Hodges | Katherine Skipper     | Henry and Juanita Beck  |
| Don Leonard            | Frank C. Leonard, Jr. | Wanda Daye              |
| Cliff and Eloise Lopp  | Doris Frye            | Al and Ruby Thomasson   |
| Marguerite Leonard     | Roy and Anne Bevan    | Maxine Lohr             |
| Gladys Snider          | Elizabeth Sink        | Holton Davis            |
| Janie Lohr             | Camille Morgan        | Banks & Eulene Shepherd |
| Deanna Michael         |                       |                         |

## *Prayer Shawl Ministry*

The Prayer Shawl/Quilt Ministry is having an organizational meeting on **Tuesday, September 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.** in the parlor. Anyone who is interested in knitting or learning to knit or crochet is welcome to join us. Mary Jo Jessup will be leading this class.

The Board of Evangelism is sponsoring this important ministry that will present, to a recipient, a shawl or quilt that has been handmade and blessed by prayers from members of this congregation. The recipient may be someone that is ill, having surgery, or in the midst of a crisis that might be helped by receiving a special gift of love and thoughtfulness. The recipients would not be limited to members of this congregation, but could include friends, relatives, co-workers, or family members.

For more info, contact either Janette Neal at 248-6325 or David Fulton at 956-1788.

*Board of Evangelism Co-Chairpersons, Janette Neal and Dave Fulton*

First Reformed UCC Members,

Thank you for all the visits, cards and prayers during Catherine's illness.

We would like to acknowledge the Friendship Club for remembering Catherine and showing their kindness and sympathy at Catherine's service.

With Our Blessings,

Velna, Richard and Martha Swing



### ***The following sent Thank You Notes for***

### ***Benevolent Gifts***

*Blowing Rock Conference Center*

*Johns River Valley Camp*

*Southern Conference UCC*

*Crisis Ministry*

*Salvation Army*

## *August Honorariums*

In Honor of **Deanna Michael**—given by her Heart Sister

Thank you to **Lee Ann Peele** for special music—given by Nancy Robbins

# SEPTEMBER STEWARDS

**Ushers:** Chairperson: Ramona Yarbrough  
 Captain: Birke McNeill  
 Ushers: Scott Frye, Thomas Johnson, Frank Callicutt

**Plate Attendant:** Adena Wall

**Acolytes:** Mary Lloyd and Annabell Callicutt

**Sound Tech:** James Gray

**Adult Joint Sunday School:** Responsible for lesson - - - New Way Class

**Social Host/Hostess:** Amy & Birke McNeill and Sauni & Thomas Johnson


**Worship Greeters:**

September	5	Doris Flynt and Peggy Bates
September	12	John and Lynn McCarn
September	19	Buddy and Rita Lohr
September	26	Katie, Shane and Callie Decker

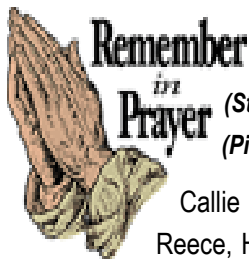
WORSHIP HOUR NURSERY

**Nursery Caregivers:**

September	5	Heidi and Ron Hutcheson
September	12	Katie and Shane Decker
September	19	Amanda and Chris Fulton
September	26	Nina and Ted Smith



Labor Day Sunday, September 5<sup>th</sup> will bring a little different slant to the daily activities here at First Reformed UCC. Beginning at 9:45 a.m. all adult classes will meet in the chapel for a joint Sunday school lesson. John Barber, our new Stephen Ministry Leader, will be teaching the lesson. Following Sunday school, we will go to the fellowship hall for our Sunday school social hosted by Amy and Birke McNeill and Sauni and Thomas Johnson. At 11:00 a.m. Reverend Patten will lead the **worship service to be held in the Chapel**. There will also be special music. Plan to be with us as we worship together.



(Alston Brook) Betty Potts  
 (Sunrise Assisted Living) Elmer Morgan  
 (St. Martins in the Pines) Barbara Schaeffer  
 (Piedmont Crossing) Henry & Ernestine Kennedy, Frances Leonard, Rita Tussey


Callie Kepley, Jacqueline Leonard, Ronnie Durham, Ernie Bonner, Sadie Bailey, Arlene Swing, Joel Reece, Henry and Juanita Beck, Willie Ruth Leonard, Giles Crowell, Micki Smith, Velna Swing, and Steve Murdock. Also, remember Van "Buster" Conrad (Gray Family), Melvin Evans (Paul Freeman's Uncle), Paul Stevens (Lisa Nelson's Cousin), Susan Cadwallader (Anne Fletcher's Mother), Terri Evans (Paul Freeman's Cousin), and please remember our men and women serving in the Armed Forces. To add a name to the prayer chain, please contact Adena Wall at 249-1904 or the church office at 248-2617.

We extend **SYMPATHY** to and share Christian hope with...

- ◆ Reid, Gary and Beth Rhodes and their family upon the death of their loved one and our friend, **Mary Pickett Rhodes**.
- ◆ Velna Swing upon the death of her sister and our friend, **Catherine Beck Leonard**.
- ◆ Gladys Snider upon the death of her mother, **Bertie Hampton**.



# September 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>1</b> 11:00 a.m. {Parlor} <b>MORNING GLORY CIRCLE</b>	<b>2</b> 5:30 p.m. {P} <b>Yoga Class</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> 9:45 a.m. {Chapel} <b>Joint Sunday School</b> 10:20 a.m. {FH} <b>Sunday School Social</b> 11:00 a.m. <b>Worship Service IN CHAPEL</b>	<b>6</b> Office Holiday 	<b>7</b> 6:30 p.m. {Parlor} <b>BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION</b>	<b>8</b> 5:30 p.m. <b>PLAY PRACTICE</b> 7:00 p.m. <b>CHOIR PRACTICE</b>	<b>9</b> 5:30 p.m. {P} <b>Yoga Class</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> 9:45 a.m. {Downstairs} <b>RALLY DAY SUNDAY SCHOOL</b> 11:00 a.m. <b>Worship Service Followed by LUNCH IN THE FH</b> 6—8 p.m. (FH) <b>COMMUNITY YOUTH GROUP</b>	<b>13</b> <b>WILLING WORKERS CLASS SERVE SHELTER MEAL</b> 5:30 p.m. {Parlor} Scrap-Book/Craft Class	<b>14</b> 6:00 p.m. {Parlor} <b>PRAYER SHAWL TRAINING CLASS</b> 7:00 p.m. {Parlor} <b>BOARD OF EVANGELISM MTG</b>	<b>15</b> 5:30 p.m. <b>PLAY PRACTICE</b> 7:00 p.m. <b>CHOIR PRACTICE</b>	<b>16</b> 5:30 p.m. {P} <b>Yoga Class</b> 6:00 p.m. (FH) <b>MEN'S BROTHERHOOD DINNER MEETING</b>	<b>17</b> <b>Southern Conference Annual Meeting</b> <b>Franklinton Center Campus</b>	<b>18</b> <b>GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY MTG</b> {Fellowship Hall}
<b>19</b> 9:45 a.m. <b>Sunday School</b> 11:00 a.m. <b>Worship Service and Kids' Club</b> 6 p.m. <b>CONSISTORY MTG.</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 7 p.m. {Parlor} <b>WOMEN'S LIFE FELLOWSHIP and KIDS' CLUB</b>	<b>22</b> Noon (FH) <b>FRIENDSHIP CLUB COVERED DISH LUNCH</b> 5:30 pm <b>PLAY PRACTICE</b> 7 p.m. <b>CHOIR PRACTICE</b>	<b>23</b> 5:30 p.m. {P} <b>Yoga Class</b> {Fellowship Hall} <b>COMMUNITY ACTION</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> <b>FUNDRAISER</b>
<b>26</b> 9:45 a.m. <b>Sunday School</b> 11:00 a.m. <b>Worship Service and Children's Church</b> 6-8 p.m. <b>COMMUNITY YOUTH</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 5:30 p.m. <b>PLAY PRACTICE</b> 7:00 p.m. <b>CHOIR PRACTICE</b>	<b>30</b> 5:30 p.m. {P} <b>Yoga Class</b>	<b>Sunday, October 10—</b> <b>Lunch and Congregational Meeting</b> <b>Saturday, October 16</b> <b>Corner Café Mystery Dinner Theatre</b>	

# Stewardship Message

## Catch Fire

*Rekindle the gift of God that is within you... 2 Timothy 1:6*

The second week of September in our church is "Rally Sunday." It's meant to be the day we get all revved up for the new program year of the church. The energy level in the congregation rises that day, as people who have been away for the summer return and greet friends and visitors. As September begins again in the church, everything seems possible!

The start of a new program year is a good time to take Paul's advice and "rekindle" all the gifts of God within not just individual Christians, but the church as a whole. Stoke the fire, is what the word means, take the small flames and find ways to add a little tinder here or a little air there and bring warmth and light. To make a fire strong usually requires adding small things regularly, and sometimes large pieces of wood as other large pieces burn away.

What does your church need to really catch fire this September? What gifts, small or large, do you have to contribute to that fire? Are there people around you who have gifts to give that need your encouragement to step up to the fire? Sometimes, as the old church camp song says, it really does "only take a spark." Is that spark you?

*Rochelle A. Stackhouse is the Senior Minister of The Church of the Redeemer, United Church of Christ, New Haven Connecticut.*

September 2010

**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



God is still speaking,

## First News

First Reformed United Church of Christ  
104 East Center Street  
Lexington, NC 27292  
Phone: 336-248-2617  
Fax: 336-248-6163  
Email: church@frucc.org

[www.frucc.org](http://www.frucc.org)

Return Service Requested

### CHURCH STAFF

Intentional Interim Minister.....Rev. Walter Patten, Ph.D.  
Email: wrpatten@earthlink.net or minister@frucc.org  
Interim 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