



**FIRST CHURCH**  
*A Place to Grow*

# NEWS NOTES

## THE FIRST CHURCH IN OBERLIN, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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**Rev. David T. Hill, Pastor**

*July/August 2011*

## IT'S NOT THE SAME WITHOUT YOU

*It's summertime and I hope that this edition of News Notes finds you enjoying some easy livin'. In a college town it is hard to escape the annual rhythm of the academy, and after months of programs, concerts, lectures, and events I do find it a blessed relief to rediscover the very different ebb and flow of summer. Summer can bring significant changes to our weekly rituals: more time out playing in the evening, greatly flexibility in our schedules, vacations that remove us from our regular settings, and opportunities to catch up with family and friends. Even the church calendar opens up: we take a break from Wednesday Night Suppers; dedicated choir members get several weeks without rehearsals. Sunday morning worship, however, remains a constant, as much a part of summer as at any other time of year. A recent UCC Stillspeaking Daily Devotional reminds us that it is truly the people that make the church. Yes, enjoy some easy livin' this summer, but be sure to include some time in the pew "with the people." After all, it just isn't the same without you.*

### **Reflection by Martin B. Copenhaver**

This fall, a beloved saint in our congregation, Marjorie Scoboria, died just short of her 104th birthday. The Sunday before her death she was in her usual spot in the congregation in the fourteenth row on the left. (Did you think we preachers don't notice that sort of thing?) She was offering her witty little quips to those around her, standing for the hymns. In other ways, however, she was limited in how she could participate. In recent years, her eyesight and her hearing were almost completely gone, but she continued to come to worship every Sunday. When I asked Marjorie about that (after all, if I were over a hundred years old, I think I would stay in bed every once in a while), she looked sur-

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# IT'S NOT THE SAME WITHOUT YOU

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prised by the question, and replied, "Because I need to be in the congregation with the people."

Woody Allen famously said, "Ninety percent of life is just showing up." But he's wrong. Ninety percent of life is showing up over and over again.

People sometimes speak of "going to church" on Sunday morning, as if the church had some kind of existence without the people, or as if it were a building.

We all know the children's game, "Here is the church, here is the steeple, open the doors and see all the people." That may be a good game, but it is bad theology. As Marjorie knew so well, the church is the people. So you have to show up. It's not a church until you get there.

**About the author:** *Martin B. Copenhaver is Senior Pastor, Wellesley Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Wellesley, MA. He is the author, with Lillian Daniel, of This Odd and Wondrous Calling: The Public and Private Lives of Two Ministers.*

*You can sign up to receive the UCC Stillspeaking Daily Devotional at <[www.ucc.org/feed-your-spirit/daily-devotional](http://www.ucc.org/feed-your-spirit/daily-devotional)>.*



## GROUP FOR GROWTH BIBLE STUDY

A wonderful season of the first Group for Growth Bible Study has ended. Eight members met on the first Wednesday of each month at noon at church to discuss chapters in the Book of Mark. They were **Joanne Erwin, Arlene Hall, Anne Sprague, Marion Drummond, Dianne Ripley, Lee Wood, and Jim and Lou Deitz**. The conversation was fairly casual, allowing everyone to present their perspective on the stories and to respond and support each other's ideas. We all plan to continue next year and are hoping more will join in this opportunity. On September 11 after church we will meet during coffee time to see who is interested and begin carving out one or two different times/groups. The groups will then determine what they choose to read and discuss. This is truly a democratic process with appropriate UCC freedoms! We hope you will consider this small-group study for spiritual growth.

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## BRANDY'S NEWS

Our nursery is staffed year-round by responsible college students. There are occasionally times, however, when situations like illness or unplanned trips home occur and leave us without nursery coverage. The Christian Education Committee is searching for one or two **adult volunteers** to serve as fall-back, last-minute, **childcare** workers. That volunteer would need to be fingerprinted (First Church will cover the fees) and be willing to step in with very little notice. Anyone interested in filling this role should let me know.

Do you like to paint, clean, sort, or organize?? The Christian Education Committee is also looking for some **volunteers** to help us **spruce up our Sunday School classrooms and nursery**. If you have a little free time over the summer to help brighten up our children's spaces, please let me know.

This summer's OACM Peace Camp was canceled due to a lack of volunteers. As we move forward, the organizers of Peace Camp are in the process of evaluating this ministry. If you're a parent of a child who has attended Peace Camp in the past two years or if you've volunteered as a teacher or helper, we're asking you to take a brief **online survey about Peace Camp**. The link can be found on the First Church website, <[www.firstchurchoberlin.org](http://www.firstchurchoberlin.org)>. Please note that there are two different surveys, one for parents and one for teachers/helpers. Please take a moment to complete the survey by July 15. On Sunday, **July 31**, at **3:00 p.m.** in Fellowship Hall we will have an open **discussion about the results of our survey and future Peace Camps**. The discussion is open to anyone who is interested in attending.

On July 17 seven of us will travel to Nashville, Tennessee, to assist with home rehabilitation and cleanup from the flooding that struck the area last year. We'll return on July 23 anxious to share our experience with you all. Please keep us in your prayers that week as we journey to share God's work with our neighbors in the south.



## FALL WESTERN RESERVE ASSOCIATION MEETING

The **Fall meeting for WRA clergy and delegates** will take place at Faith UCC, 575 Richmond Road in Richmond Heights on Saturday, **November 5**. Connie Schultz, Pulitzer prize-winning author, will give the keynote address. Save the date!

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# JULY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Sun., June 26–  
Sun., July 3**      **First Church hosts IHN / Family Promise families**
- Sun., July 3**      **Worship, 10:00 a.m., Rev. David T. Hill; Communion**
- Mon., July 4**      **FIRST CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED – FOURTH OF JULY**
- Tues., July 5**      Community Peace Builders, 4:00 p.m., JFO Room
- Sat., July 9**      United Fellowship meeting, 9:30 – 11:00 a.m., William Penn Dining Room, Kendal
- Sun., July 10**      **Worship, 10:00 a.m., Rev. David T. Hill**  
Fellowship Committee meeting, 12:00 noon, JFO Room
- Tues., July 12**      Witness and Membership Committee meeting, 2:30 p.m., JFO Room  
Facilities Committee meeting, 7:00 p.m., location TBA
- Thurs., July 14**      Finance Committee meeting, 7:30 p.m., JFO Room
- Sun., July 17**      **Worship, 10:00 a.m., Beth Blissman (Director, Oberlin College  
Bonner Center for Service and Learning), Guest Preacher**
- Sun., July 24**      **Worship, 10:00 a.m., Rev. Milton Ellis, Guest Preacher**
- Tues., July 26**      Outreach and Service Committee meeting, 4:30 p.m., JFO Room  
Executive Council meeting, 7:30 p.m., JFO Room
- Sun., July 31**      **Worship, 10:00 a.m., Rev. David T. Hill**  
Peace Camp discussion, 3:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall



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## AUGUST CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Tues., Aug. 2** Community Peace Builders, 4:00 p.m., JFO Room
- Sun., Aug. 7** **Worship, 10:00 a.m., Rev. David T. Hill; Communion**  
Fellowship Committee meeting, 12:00 noon, JFO Room
- Tues., Aug. 9** Witness and Membership Committee meeting, 2:30 p.m., JFO Room  
Facilities Committee meeting, 7:00 p.m., location TBA  
Worship Committee meeting, 7:30 p.m., JFO Room
- Thurs., Aug. 11** Finance Committee meeting, 7:30 p.m., JFO Room
- Sun., Aug. 14** **Worship, 10:00 a.m., Rev. David T. Hill**
- Tues., Aug. 16** Christian Education Committee meeting, 7:00 p.m., JFO Room
- Wed., Aug. 17** **NEWS NOTES DEADLINE** 🖱️
- Sun., Aug. 21** **Worship, 10:00 a.m., Rev. David T. Hill**
- Tues., Aug. 23** Outreach and Service Committee meeting, 4:30 p.m., JFO Room  
Executive Council meeting, 7:30 p.m., JFO Room
- Sun., Aug. 28** **Worship, 10:00 a.m., Rev. David T. Hill**



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## SIGNS OF STEWARDSHIP

I am writing this on Flag Day. As I grew up I attended many churches. This was sort of my recreation. All of those churches displayed our national flag, and naturally this was what all congregations did. When I came to First Church, no flag! Since I am an American history buff, I wondered about what this congregation was saying. Then I began to hear about “5 for 5,” “IHN,” “CUE,” “OCWM,” and other abbreviations that answered my questions. This is a very generous congregation and, as the Stewardship Committee finds out each year, not just for the abbreviation but for the annual programs of the church. The flag is in the heart of this congregation. A flag of respect, generosity and love for all the needs of society and for the needs of this wonderful House of God we call First Church. Thanks for all you do.

—Your Stewardship Chair



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## UNITED FELLOWSHIP MEETING

On Saturday, **July 9**, the United Fellowship will gather at **9:30 a.m.** in Kendal's William Penn Dining Room. Our enjoyment of **coffee, juice, and muffins** will be followed by “**A Summer Sociable.**” Everyone is welcome to join in this gathering of friends—we always have a good time!

**Note:** There will be NO United Fellowship meeting in August as we take a summer “break.”

**P.S.:** Our June meeting was outstanding! Attendance reached 50, including some new faces. The music was charming, and the birthday party was great.



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## E-MAIL BUDDIES NEEDED

Some of our members do not have e-mail and so cannot receive all-church e-mail messages. If you would be willing to **call members and friends without e-mail and pass all-church messages along to them**, please e-mail the Church office and indicate your willingness. And if you **need an e-mail buddy**, call the Church office and let Diane Jones know. The Witness and Membership Committee will then find you a buddy to ensure that you will be connected.



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## CONCERNS AND REJOICINGS

As chair of the Stewardship Committee, **Ron Rollins** has asked several members of the congregation to offer, during services of worship, brief personal reflections on the significance of the church in their lives and in the life of the community. These “stewardship moments” have been extraordinarily thoughtful, informative and probing. **Sarah Colson**, for example, spoke movingly about the commitment to service (without expectation of recognition or reward) that she has seen so abundantly manifest in First Church.

Barbara Blodgett, who was preaching that same day during **Pastor David Hill’s** absence, was a striking illustration of Sarah’s theme. Born, reared, and ordained in Oberlin, she is currently Minister for Vocation and Formation for the national UCC. Her latest book—published just this year by the Alban Institute—is entitled *Becoming the Pastor You Hoped to Be*. On the previous Sunday, we benefited from another act of gracious service: **Jim Deitz** preached a challenging sermon about Pentecost.

The First Church tradition of service brought two busloads of third-grade students from Prospect School to the Meeting House in early June: the visit was part of a field trip connected with their study of Oberlin history. During the Oberlin College Commencement ceremonies on Tappan Square, the annual award for Distinguished Service to the Community was bestowed on **Jim White**. On Father’s Day, Sarah Andrews reported on the remarkable work carried out during the previous week by a group of Oberlinian conscripts for the Appalachian Service Project, under the able leadership of her father, Erik Andrews.

Even in grief, we are reminded of exceptional service. Indeed, a memorial service for **Jane Cauffiel Thomson**, who died on June 10, is being planned for sometime in September—and will feature the Cauffiel organ, the installation of which in the Meeting House Jane’s munificence made possible. We also grieve with **Anne Helm**, whose sister Rhea Menzel Whitehead died in Toronto on June 14.

In late June, Dylan Gargasz will participate in a tour of Ireland to be undertaken by the Oberlin Choristers. In July, Tyler Gargasz will attend a summer camp at Temple Hills. Courtney Merrill has returned to Oberlin temporarily to lend her marvelous theatrical talents to several performances of the Oberlin Summer Theater, under the direction of Paul Moser.

On June 22, **Paul Oncley** became a centenarian. His friends at Kendal marked the day with a party, but worshippers at First Church were able to celebrate with him on the prior Sunday, when he led members of the Bell Choir in a version of *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*.

Ill health can hobble even the most ardent of servants. **Mary Jean Rice** is in the Kendal Care Center with debilitating back pain. And **Al Buck’s** slow recovery continues: he is pleased to have moved to the Westlake Health Care Center, where he is undergoing physical therapy.

—RML

**The First Church In Oberlin,  
United Church of Christ**

106 North Main Street  
Oberlin, Ohio 44074



**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

***July Birthdays***

- |                          |                    |                   |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 3 Alfred Hubler          | 14 Jean Dessecker  | 25 Monica Fuquay  |
| 7 Mary Ailey, Anna Fritz | 15 Erikson Andrews | 25 Pauline Hayes  |
| 8 Diane Whitehead Krueck | 15 Sue Angell      | 25 Milt Yinger    |
| 9 Bobbie Carlson         | 17 Tina Zwegat     | 26 Susan Johnson  |
| 12 Kyla Koos             | 18 Matt Fritz      | 28 Janet Bolland  |
| 13 Ron Rollins           | 20 Marjorie Ramp   | 28 Paul Murray    |
| 14 Katherine Cavanaugh   | 20 Zoë Zwegat      | 31 George Andrews |
| 14 Sophia Cavanaugh      | 24 Zachary Kelley  | 31 Keegan Koos    |

***August Birthdays***

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|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Emily Pugsley       | 16 Joanne Bearss    | 27 Budd Werner         |
| 2 Meredith Curtis     | 17 Prue Richards    | 28 Milton Ellis        |
| 3 Constance Lebeau    | 19 Zach Norenberg   | 28 Janet Kelsey Werner |
| 5 Jean Eaton          | 20 David Ashenhurst | 29 John Cavanaugh      |
| 6 Dick Myerly         | 21 Joel Cambron     | 29 Sarah Colson        |
| 8 Ben Thompson        | 23 William Farquhar | 29 Jennifer Ring       |
| 9 Don Norenberg       | 24 Linda Slocum     | 29 Don VanDyke         |
| 10 Laurel Price Jones | 26 Isabel Andrews   | 29 Gay Weiss           |
| 10 Tom Rice           | 27 J.J. Schaum      | 31 Ann Potter          |