

### Church Staff

Rev. Rebecca Clancy, Pastor  
Karen Howard, Music Director  
Patricia Alcorn, Organist  
Lynnly Buchanan, Church Secretary  
Catherine Erwin, Minister of Christian Education

### Church Officers

Clyde Jones, Moderator  
Mike Rosier, Vice-Moderator  
David Fauntleroy, Treasurer  
Dan Brand, Financial Secretary  
Open, Historian  
Open, Clerk

### Board Chairs

Barb Malone, Worship & Deacons Board  
Daniele Gibney & Lynnly Buchanan, Christian Education Board  
Becca Clancy & Dan Brand, Missions Bd.  
Lynnly Buchanan, Properties Board  
Dave Buchanan, Stewardship Bd.



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## Haiku String for a Blustery Winter

By Lynnly Buchanan

The old year tires out  
Days before the new begins  
Even ere Christmas

When the babe arrives  
He is greeted by a day  
Longer by minutes

The New Year gives us  
Hope for the coming Spring time  
Though snow stings the cheek

So blow winds, fly snow  
We are warm in our houses  
Your days are numbered





### Sunday Schedule

- 9:00 am Choir Practice
- 10:00 am Morning Worship
- 11:00 am Coffee/ Fellowship

### Board Meetings & Events

Sun	Jan 3	10:00 am	Holy Communion Cameron School Valentine Collection starts
Sat	Jan 9	09:00 am	Refugee Ministry Workshop
Sun	Jan 10	11:15 am	Confirmation Class
		12:30 pm	Missions Board meeting
Fri	Jan 15	13:00 pm	JUILET's Meeting
Sun	Jan 17	11:15 am	Council Meeting
Sun	Jan 24	11:15 am	Annual Meeting
Sat	Jan 30	18:00 pm	Lazarus House dinner service
Sun	Feb 14	11:15 am	Mardi Gras Chili Cook off

### Birthdays !

Carol O	Adam F
Lucille L	Tony N
Emilie G	Katherine B
Marilyn C	Karen H
Emma M	Jackie W
Bob M	Russ O
Stephanie M	Marion G

### Anniversaries !

Florence and John E	6 Years
Carol and Russ O	8 Years

*If your birthday or anniversary isn't listed above, please call the church office to update our records.*

### Remember In Your Prayers...

- Pat Alcorn's mother, Marcina (illness);
- Karen Howard's brother, Bruce (illness);
- Sue Cechner's mother, Maxine (illness);
- Dave Buchanan's friend, Laura (illness);
- Karen Stark's friend, Beth (illness);
- Karen Haug's mother (surgery & recovery);
- Karen Haug's sister, Lynn (illness);
- Rev. Charlotte Nold, St. John UCC (illness);
- Cheri Barrett's daughter, Jenea (illness)

Additionally, please remember our ill and home-bound members: Emma Gene Buchanan, Betty Deitrich, Nell Graham, Elsie Hogancamp, Lucille Landberg, and Esther Wessels. Finally, please pray for those serving in the military around the world.

### For the Record...



Pulpit Associate volunteers for the coming months:

January Dave Buchanan

If you are interested in serving as Pulpit Associate or Usher talk with Barb Malone, Worship Board Chairman [person].

### Food For Thought...

“Perhaps I am a bear, or some hibernating animal underneath, for the instinct to be half asleep all winter is so strong in me.”

- Anne Morrow Lindbergh

## From The Pastor

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*Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky;  
The flying cloud, the frosty light;  
the year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.*

*Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the sonw:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.*

*Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.*

*Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.  
(Alfred Lord Tennyson)*

As we ring in the New Year, Alfred Lord Tennyson reminds us that the New Year summons something deeper -- a deeper reminder -- in Christians than simply the change from one calendar year to another. The New Year summons us to the newness that is made possible by Jesus Christ.

But what is this newness? What is the old that Christ allows us to leave behind? It is the old person, the person defined by sin. The historical church often attempted to give expression to this in a way that was slightly skewed. It declared that Christ allowed us to live sinless lives altogether; that the waters of baptism washed away sin and permitted us to sin no more. This led to the false foundation that Christians were somehow sinless, and on this foundation was built all sorts of monstrosities -- the "front" that Christians attempted to maintain that they were perfect, the

allowance Christians entitled themselves to judge others, etc. The church has been challenged down through the ages to give expression more rightly to just what it means that Christ gives us new life over against sin.

The best expression is that through Christ Christians stand as forgiven sinners -- not that Christians will sin no more, but that as they strive and fail to follow the sinless pattern of Christ, they stand forgiven. The new life Christ offers has to do then with the Christian's relationship with God. On this right foundation, Christians become humble, grateful, sympathetic, compassionate servants of the servant Christ.

The New Year serves to remind Christians, therefore, that they may at all times reclaim their right identity as forgiven sinners and follow in the paths of true discipleship. If we have made resolutions this year then, let our central resolution be to access the forgiveness that is made possible through Christ, and extend that forgiveness to our world.

With you in His service,

Becca

## From The Moderator

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I am happy to turn over the bulk of my space this month to Pastor Becca. I have little to say at this frigid time of year save, "Have a safe and merry New Year." I hope to see you all at church or about town in the coming months, as I enjoy your company and of course the opportunity to worship with you. Be safe, and be cheerful, surely the worst of winter is behind us...surely.

Until next time, Shalom!

Mike

## VICE MODERATOR'S REPORT

Happy New Year!! It was a good Christmas season for the choir. Even though we could not perform the Cantata this year we did three songs for the Christmas Eve service. Notwithstanding the freezing rain and icy roads we had a wonderful turn-out for the service. I was amazed with the number of candles that were burning for the final hymn, *Silent Night*. The choir came through again even after being snow-out on the final Wednesday night rehearsal and all the health concerns of our fearless director and her family. Prior to that service we caroled at Michaelsen at the Holmstad and visited the homebound. The children's pageant was the best ever and the kids did a super job reading their lines and having a good time. The choir (which has been promoted to a *Chancel Choir*) added some support for their singing. Thanks to everyone who joined us.

As an estate planner I was wondering if we would ever get to the year 2010. You should know that this is the year that the Federal Estate tax is abolished (for one year only). Congress has not decided as yet if they should change this. So it may be a good time to become a decedent and let your kids have your estate tax-free. I remember a time in the 1980's when you got a benefit from dying during one year. I can't remember if anybody kept statistics on suicides or pulling the plug early to take advantage of this tax break. Anyhow don't do anything drastic until you know what Congress is going to do.

Our endowment fund at Edward Jones has a value of \$35,666.47 as of 12/24/09.

See you in Church and bring a friend. God bless.  
Clyde Jones

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## From Stewardship

I hope and trust that you and your family had a great Christmas and that 2009 was a good year. The Buchanan's had a busy year and we were blessed in so many ways. Now it's on to 2010.

We are in the final stages of this year's pledge drive so please do your best to get your pledges in as soon as you can. Please keep in mind that the Church receives a large percentage of its operating funds from our pledge drive. Your commitment allows us to continue funding Missions' projects, provides our youth with a strong Christian Education and keeps the Church property in good working order. We are a small Congregation that does such good work supporting those less fortunate than ourselves. Because we are small, we need everyone who is able to participate.

May God bless you and yours in 2010!

Yours,  
Dave Buchanan

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## Prayer Team



The FCCG Prayer Team's focus for the month of January will be to concentrate on new beginnings: for our lives as we center more around God, for our families as we grow together in His Word, and for our country as we center our hearts in His peace and love. Remember to keep trying to devote 5 minutes a day in dedicated prayer. Contact me if you have any prayer ideas for the future months. You may contact Sue Cechner.

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## What's Up With the Missions Board?

**Salvation Army Angel Tree:** Thanks to everyone who participated in the Salvation Army Angel Tree program this year. We were able to help needy parents provide a happy Christmas to 30 children in the Tri-cities area.

In January we will be starting our collection for the **Cameron School Valentine Day party and Healthy Foods unit** in school. We will be collecting money to purchase a large fruit basket for them for their Valentine's Day party, as well as for a unit they do in March called Healthy Foods, in which they sample all sorts of different whole grain foods, fruits and vegetables. Watch your bulletin for special collection envelopes.

Mark your calendars for Sunday, April 18<sup>th</sup>! We will be having a **St. John's UCC worship and work day** in the city. The confirmation class will be visiting St. John's for service and all are invited to join them. After church we will sponsor a quick lunch and will move on to helping them with some chores they have around the building. We will be going by bus, so you need not worry about transportation. Prior to the trip we will be collecting canned goods for their food pantry, so you can plan to help with that drive if you will not be able to make the trip with us.

**Another Mark Your Calendars Opportunity! Exodus Refugee Ministries will be out to our church on Saturday, January 9<sup>th</sup> from 9am – Noon for a *refugee ministry training workshop*. We will discuss the whole refugee ministry process in general, and our next steps which are intended to put us on the road to housing a refugee family in the future. First steps first of course. If you are interested in learning more about the Missions Board plans for refugee ministry, plan to attend.**

As with last year, we will hold a ***rummage sale*** to benefit St. John UCC in Chicago. The sale will be held in the church basement next June. Our target sale dates are Friday June 4<sup>th</sup> and Saturday June 5<sup>th</sup>. Please start saving rummage items now. Kim Valentine

has generously donated storage space, so you can turn them over to the church right away, you don't need to hold on to them if you don't have the room. We can also pick up large items, so call the church to let us know.

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"I sometimes think we expect too much of Christmas Day. We try to crowd into it the long arrears of kindness and humanity of the whole year. As for me, I like to take my Christmas a little at a time, all through the year." ~David Grayson, American author and journalist

Christmas Day has come and gone. Christmastide, for some, includes the twelve days of Christmas, the time from Christmas Day until Epiphany, or in some traditions, the day of the Three Kings. During this time, we pass from the old year into the new, and so I ask you, what will we do with this New Year?

"Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."  
Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

Love, the grace of God in the love and presence of Jesus, the Christ, for each and every one of us, is the message, the Good News of the Gospels. The Great Commandment can be paraphrased "to love God with all that we are and to love each other as we love ourselves". So God loves in incredible, amazing abundance and simply asks that we return the favor. And we Are Given the gift of each and every day of our lives, however many that may total, in which to strive to follow that commandment, to respect and cherish that un-earnable gift of love.

... But say a prayer, Pray for the other ones / at Christmastime its hard, but when you're having fun / there's a world outside your window / and it's a world of dread and fear.

Where the only water flowing is the sting of bitter tears. And the Christmas bells that ring there are the clanging chimes of doom. Well, tonight thank God it's them instead of you.

Well, there won't be snow in Africa this Christmas. The greatest gift they'll get this year is life. Where nothing ever grows, no rain nor river flows,

*Do they know its Christmastime at all?*

BandAid 20

What do we do with this amazing Gift? This Gift of love, Gift of life? What will you do with your life this year? In listening to one of the radio stations that played Christmas music all day for weeks before Christmas, the song above caught my attention every time. So did Good King Wenceslas, and the words of the Christmas program song Peace for Christmas.

“When a poor man came in sight, gathering winter fuel. ... thou and I shall see him dine when we bear them thither.” Good King Wenceslas

It makes me incredibly sad that, as we face the turning of the decade, these words of modernity and past still have place and meaning, *but* I find incredible hope in working with such unique and dedicated people as all of you here at 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Geneva! In this congregation we are in constant conversation and constant *action* against the forces of injustice and pain in our world. So many people looking inward to tend to their personal faith journey, and looking outward to put that faith into action. You are a reminder everyday that Christian is not just a state of being, but a state of doing.

*Peace for Christmas –*

The only way to have peace on earth is to make it happen every day.

In the thoughts you think when you're all alone, in the things you do and say. If you start at home in your neighborhood, you can make the dream come true. The only way to have peace on earth is if peace begins with you.

In a world of peace there would be no crying. In a world of peace there would be no fear, so God's peace would be the perfect gift to give this year.

The only way to have peace on earth is to have God's love in every heart. Cast out hate and fear of your fellow men, each of us must do our part. Give a helping hand and a second chance and I'm sure you'll all agree.

The only way to have peace on earth, is if peace begins with me.

In a world of peace there would be no crying. In a world of peace there would be no fear, so God's peace would be the perfect gift to give this year. (Grace Hawthorne)

From the midst of such a cloud of witnesses and with words of God's peace ringing in my ears, I listen for the bells that toll the beginning of another year in God's grace. I give thanks for the presence of God in Christ in my life, in being able to look around and see each of you on the road beside me, and for the opportunity to serve the one who is the Author of Love and Creator of the Universe, another year.

May the love of God, that surpasses all human understanding, be with *us all*, now and evermore. Amen.

Thanks and Blessings my Church Family,  
Catherine

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## Talk About Your Faith

By Lillian Daniel, Senior Minister  
First Congregational Church, UCC, Glen Ellyn, IL

Excerpt from Acts 4:13-21

“So they called them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, ‘Whether it is right in God's sight to listen to you rather than to

God, you must judge; for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

#### Reflection by Lillian Daniel

I have long found it ironic that the same UCC members who vote on gay marriage, propose solutions to conflict in the Middle East and take up other controversial issues are unwilling to talk to others about their personal experience of God—and here’s the irony—lest they offend someone.

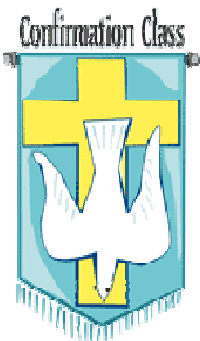
We come by our silence for noble reasons of course. We don’t want to “shove our religion down people’s throats,” or to imply that our way is the only way to heaven. But trust me, folks, you can talk about your faith with joy and love, and without judging others.

In the UCC, for too long we have thought of faith-sharing as something that “those other Christians do.” And other Christians do share their faith. It’s one reason why conservative and fundamentalist churches grow. Their members feel energized, even compelled, to share their faith and invite their neighbor to church. We in the UCC are more likely to tell our neighbor how to vote than to invite them to church.

But it doesn’t have to be that way. Having written a book about reclaiming the practice of testimony, I get to lead workshops on this subject all over the country, and I am sensing a movement of the Holy Spirit. Progressive, inclusive, justice-seeking churches are learning that we need to share our faith, too. The world needs to hear about our churches—and so may your neighbor.

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### Confirmation Classes



Mark your calendars for the following important Confirmation dates:

Sunday, January 10: Confirmation Class, 11:30-12:30

Sunday, January 31: Confirmation Class, 11:30-12:30

Sunday, February 21: Confirmation Class, 11:30-12:30

Sunday, March 21: Confirmation Class, 11:30-12:30

Sunday, April 11: Confirmation Class, 11:30-12:30

Sunday, April 18: St. John’s visit and work day 9:00am

Saturday, May 29: Confirmation Dinner 6:00pm

Sunday, May 30: Confirmation Sunday, 10:00am

In addition to the above dates, the confirmation class (and anyone who would like to attend), will be visiting Trinity UCC church in Chicago. That date has not been confirmed yet. Watch your bulletins and newsletters for it.

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### Board Spots for the 2010 Calendar Year



The nominating committee is in the process of filling board & officer vacancies for the 2010 calendar year. Serving on a board is a great way to become involved in the leadership and ministry of your church. If you are interested in serving on a board please contact Vice Moderator, Clyde Jones, or one of the Board Chairmen listed below:

**Missions:** This Board directs the church’s charitable missions, which include apportionment of budgeted missions funds, special offerings (CROP Walk, One Great hour of Sharing, etc), and special and long-term missions projects Like St. John’s and Lazarus House.

**Properties:** This Board manages and maintains the facilities of the church and Peterson House.

**Stewardship:** The Stewardship Board is responsible for the annual pledge drive, which provides the church with its month-to-month operating funds.

**Worship:** This Board plans the worship calendar and worship services, decorates the sanctuary, and arranges for ushers and pulpit associates.

**Christian Education:** This Board plans and implements the educational programs for children of all ages within the congregation.

### **And coming soon to a church near you...**

#### **The Deacons Board**

This board was disbanded several years ago (because of a lack of members...and no chairman), and its duties were temporarily taken over by the Worship Board. We have discovered a great need to re-establish this board now, and are looking for people interested in the following responsibilities...

The Deacons Board will be responsible for welcoming visitors, reaching out to new and old members, visiting with the homebound, and arranging occasional meals for members in need due to illness, injury, death, etc. The Deacons Board also arranges for light refreshments after member funerals if the family wishes to have a church reception. Join the board now, and help give it some direction!

The new Deacons Board will meet on Sunday Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss plans for the board and a general direction. The more people who are interested in it's work, the less work for everyone.

**If you are interested in joining any of our church boards, please contact Clyde Jones, Becca, or Mike Rosier.**



### **JULIET Meeting**

The JULIET group will meet in the Friendship Room at Michaelson Care Center at the Holmstad Village, on Friday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, from 1pm to 3pm. Join us for lots of fun conversation! Please call Ruth Marsh or Nancy Hannah if you need a ride in order to come – we will be happy to pick you up!

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### **A Global Missions Church Minute**

#### **Walking Humbly**

Written by Erin McKinney  
January 1, 2010

*...what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8*

Caminante, "To Walk One's Path", is the organization I'm working with as a Global Ministries Intern. The name was created by the first children who participated in the program because it represented their main form of transportation, walking, and it is a symbol of various walks of life. I had the opportunity to visit the home of one of my students, a young girl, age 11. Her family makes candy in their home to sell to tourists on the beach. I recognize the importance for this young girl to learn English. I also am humbled by the fact that she walks an hour through the Caribbean heat to attend my English class. She bought breakfast with the 10 pesos she probably made selling sweets and was gracious enough to offer me her breakfast.

In a community that is predominantly dependent on tourism, speaking English is crucial especially to acquire one of the better paying jobs in the town. All of the children are required to learn English in school; however, more often than not there is no English teacher, so the regular classroom teacher is attempting to

teach a language that they don't know themselves. I am proud to be teaching them English to help them have more opportunities in life. Yet, my students are giving much more to me, the gift of an example of how to live a life as Jesus has taught -- to live in community filled with humble sharing. I continue to accompany the staff of Caminante to do as the Lord requires of us "To do Justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God" alongside the children and youth of this community in hope of not necessarily changing a world of problems, but being a world of change for the youth with which I work.

Let us pray and act with Erin to bring good things to our world.

*Erin serves as a Global Mission Intern with Caminante in Boca Chica, Dominican Republic. She works with children in Caminante's Outreach Ministry.*

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### **NOTES FROM THE LOFT**



Having been absent from the monthly newsletter for awhile one of my resolutions for the new year is to get back on schedule bringing you choir news and events. The choir experienced it's most difficult season in recent years beginning in September. We had a number of illnesses, surgeries, the usual traveling schedules and Mother Nature got her hand in things too. But even when their numbers were few the choir gathered to practice and bring their best to you on Sunday morning. I want to thank all of you for your prayers, cards and concern as I went through a health scare in November. Fortunately, I've made a good recovery and I'm happy to be back in the swing of things.

One of the pieces that we performed on Christmas Eve, "Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella" required "four hands" on the piano (duet) and we were blessed to have Jewel Fenne, Mark's mom, volunteer to share the duet with Pat. She came each Wednesday

night for weeks and stayed after worship on several occasions to practice with Pat and the choir. The results were terrific and we feel like we gained a new friend as well. Thank you so much Pat and Jewel. We also welcomed back Bob Norman's son, Josh and my granddaughter, Katherine Albano, who performed with Bob and I to do "The Little Drummer Boy" at the opening of the service. Mark Fenne brought his trumpet and added his glorious sound to Pat's organ for several of the Christmas carols.

And speaking of carols, the choir spent several hours Christmas caroling on December 20<sup>th</sup>. We had a great time bringing a little Christmas to our church family at Holmstad and Michaelsen's where others were drawn by the singing of the carols and gathered around to listen. We made a stop at Leona Johnson's as well. We gathered at the Bettinghaus' for time of food and fellowship and were joined by some other choir members who were unable to come caroling. Thank you to Dave and Louise for a wonderful evening.

As the door closes on December and 2009, we are eager to begin a new year; healthier and ready to sing. A look at the upcoming church calendar tells us that Ash Wednesday is just around the corner on February 17<sup>th</sup> so it is time to put away the Christmas music and begin looking toward Easter. The church calendar is much like our lives, we no sooner meet one deadline than the next one is upon us. We are looking forward to Katherine Bettinghaus' return in January and hope that she will come and share her beautiful voice with us as she returns to Geneva.

At year's end, I want to take a moment to thank the congregation for their support of our music ministry each year. We are blessed with a choir family that loves to sing, laugh and enjoy the friendship that we share. The choir is always ready to welcome a newcomer so stop by on Wednesday night at 7pm and give the choir a try.

HAPPY NEW YEAR !

KAREN