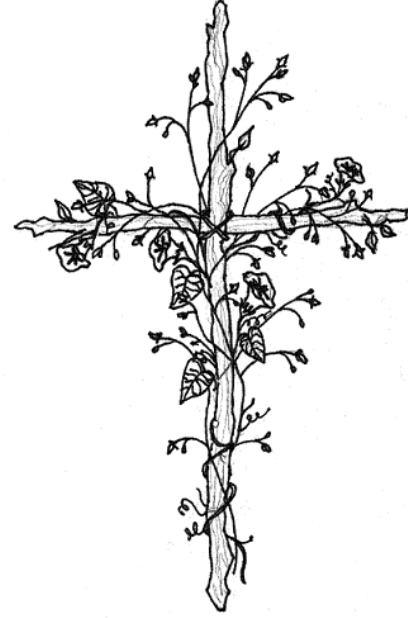


Congregational News
First Congregational Church of Geneva
United Church of Christ
321 Hamilton St.
Geneva, Illinois 60134

February 2011

Return Service Requested

Congregational News



Growing in the
Spirit,
Come Grow With
Us!

February 2011

Church Staff

Rev. Rebecca Clancy, Pastor
Catherine Erwin, Minister of Christian Education
Karen Howard, Music Director
Patricia Alcorn, Organist
Lynnly Buchanan, Church Secretary
Phil Potoczek, In-Care Seminarian
Kyle Tade, In-Care Seminarian
Jillian Lindeen, In-Care Seminarian

Church Officers

Clyde Jones, Moderator
Dave Buchanan, Vice-Moderator
David Fauntleroy, Treasurer
Dan Brand, Financial Secretary
Open, Historian
Sue Cechner & Barb Malone, Clerks

Board Chairs

Barb Malone, Worship
Sharon Jones & Kim Valentine, Deacons Board
Daniele Gibney & Lynnly Buchanan, Christian Education Board
Becca Clancy & Nancy Hannah, Missions Bd.
Lynnly Buchanan, Properties Board
Mike rosier, Stewardship Bd.

The First Congregational Church of Geneva
United Church of Christ
321 Hamilton St
Geneva, IL 60134
(630) 232-7143
geneva-ucc@sbcglobal.net

visit our web site at:
geneva-ucc.org

My Son is a Cat Suitcase

By L Buchanan

My son is a cat suitcase;
At first glance he seems to be of little use.
Why would a cat need a suitcase after all?
They have no belongings; no reason to travel.

But at bottom, anyone could benefit from a suitcase.
If your owners left for the weekend,
It's roomy enough for a load of snacks.
And wouldn't you love to tuck in a toy to entertain you at the sitters?

And what if you wanted to leave home for good?
Would a handbag serve your purpose?
Could everything you own possibly fit into a valise or a satchel?
Some things would end up in a plastic sack.

And there never existed a cat possessive of enough belongings
To warrant a steamer trunk;
Plus cats are generally discouraged
From steaming.

Like a cat suitcase my son has a few specific uses.
He sets the table for dinner,
And is a reliable source
For zombie information.

If you need an item from a very tall shelf
No other offspring will suit the purpose.
He has just the right sized sense of humor,
And his heart is huge; plus he has lots of pockets for snacks.

Those who know him unwell question the need for him,
And often wonder if he won't someday
Be forgotten at the back of the closet, or sold at a garage sale.
But we like keep him out where can't forget about him.

It's just practical; my son is a cat suitcase.



Sunday Schedule

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

Board Meetings & Events

Sunday, Feb 6	10:00 am	Communion Sunday EAPPI visit during service Veterans of the Cross drive starts
Sunday, Feb 13	11:15 am	Deacons Board meeting
Saturday, Feb 19	8:30 am	Men's Breakfast
Sunday, Feb 20	11:45 am	Worship Board meeting
Sunday, Feb 27	11:45 am	Council Meeting
Sunday, Mar 6	10:00 am	Communion Sunday
	11:30 am	ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF
Wed, March	7:30 pm	Ash Wednesday Services

Birthdays !

2/6	Lisa R	2/20	Ron D
2/11	Andrew F	2/22	Maddy S
2/14	Jennifer S	2/24	Dick S
2/15	Earl W	2/24	Lynnly B
2/15	Helen C	2/27	Karl S
2/16	Joan R		

Anniversaries !

Denise and David F	26	Years
Cheri and Scott B	30	Years

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

Remember In Your Prayers...

Please keep the following individuals in your prayers this week:

- Karen Howard's cousin, Tom (illness);
- Pat Alcorn's friend, Josephine (illness);
- Pat Alcorn's friend, Ericka (illness);
- Pat Alcorn's friend, Buzz (illness);
- Pat Alcorn's father-in-law, Ken (illness);
- Amanda Rodman's brother, Cody (struggles);
- Dave's friend, Laura (illness);
- Catherine Erwin's friend, Lynn (illness);
- Catherine Erwin's husband, Bob (illness);
- Barb Sharp's niece, Amy (surgery, illness);
- Barb Sharp's brother, Steve (illness);
- Lynnly's uncle, Ken (illness)

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

For the Record...



Pulpit Associate volunteers for the coming months:

February	Youth
March	Barb Malone and Louise Bettinghaus

If you are interested in serving as Pulpit Associate or Usher talk with Barb Malone, Worship Board Chairperson.

Food For Thought...

"It is easier to guard a sack full of fleas than a girl in love."

Yiddish Proverb

From The Pastor

Although by the time you read this it will be “yesterday’s news”, at present the snow is still falling. The drifts have created a new, if temporary, topography that is seldom witnessed. Yes, the snow presents its hassles and challenges, but it must be granted its due. It is surely beautiful to behold. It somehow endows a sense of serenity and sublimity.

Yesterday, however, was a different story. The calm that preceded the storm felt downright ominous. The “still” was no still at all. It felt more that it was merely clearing the way for the assault.

The snow storm of 2011 is a reminder in our own backyard of the power and force of nature. That reminder comes to us from distant locales – just now from Australia – but the reminder is all the more vivid as we begin to dig out.

The ancient pagans had a keen sense of the power and force of nature, but it was thoroughly negative. They associated the power and force of nature with preternatural chaos - Leviathan – to which humankind was subject and fell victim.

A biblical writer attempted to offer a corrective to this. He declared that nature was the good creation of a good God provided to humankind to steward in service to him. That biblical writer, 2,500 years distant from us, could never have envisioned how the successors of his tradition would choose to “steward” nature – by such egregious and gratuitous spoliation that the forces of nature have been skewed in such a way that they are now turning against us. It is sadly ironic that we must turn back to the ancient pagans for an insight that we have willfully lost: We are, in the last analysis, subject to the power and force of nature. We are its victims. It is as though in our heedlessness and myopia and greed we have engaged Leviathan in a battle we will never win, in a battle that we can always and only lose. As another biblical writer reminds us, “Those who sow the wind will reap the whirlwind.”

May the snow storm of 2011, and all reminders of the power and force of nature, spur our efforts to faithful stewardship of nature and recall to us that it is God, and not humankind, who is the Lord of Nature.

With you in His Service,

Becca

From The Moderator

Greetings from my snow covered bunker. Though we are in the middle of winter, still the first peek of Spring is visible for us: longer days, warmer sun, and stores stocking Easter decorations. That is one good thing about stores, they keep you moving forward. There is no rest for the retailer. Likewise there is no rest for our little church.

We have a visit this month from John and Faye Buttrick, who spent some time observing the situation in Israel and Palestine, and will be giving a presentation after church to enlighten us. The Men’s Group, SoSoGo, has been going strong, meeting every third Saturday for breakfast, conversation and a few chores. I’m really happy to see this group reform. I recall my Dad’s involvement many years ago and am glad to have this opportunity myself now. It’s a great time to spend with my sons, who never seem to get as much attention as my daughters, and I hope they keep the group going when they are adults in the church (the moderator maybe, and whatever Henry plans to be...).

We have much to look forward to this year. Watch you newsletters for info from the properties board regarding improvements to be made (once they are hammered out). Plan too on coming to church on the 6th of March for our annual Chili Cook-off. It’s always fun and food, what more could you ask for?

Have a great February,

Dave Buchanan



Sensation of the Mystical
("found poetry")

The most beautiful and profound emotion we can experience
is the sensation of the mystical.

It is the power of all true science.

He to whom this emotion is a stranger,
who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe,
is as good as dead.

To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists,
manifesting itself as the highest wisdom
and the most radiant beauty,
which our dull faculties can comprehend
only in their primitive forms -
this knowledge, this feeling,
is at the center of true religion.

~ Albert Einstein ~

(The Merging of Spirit and Science, cited in
All Things Give God Glory, ed. by S. Rena)

Albert Einstein had the right idea about the Mystery of the Universe when he wrote this piece. While his expression of God in the context, if indeed truly present at all, is somewhat pale, nebulous, yes, secular rather than sacred – it still resonates for me. What many of us long for is an experience of God that is beautiful, that triggers an emotional response in us.

Dictionary.com first defines faith as “confidence or trust in a person or thing” followed by “belief that is not based on proof”. Our faith is indeed the belief in someone/thing, God, and our trust that God acts in our world for good. While we see the hand of God in our world, some things, even for those of faith, are indeed in the realm of mystery. We refer to the presence of God in Communion and sometimes Baptism as the Great Mystery.

Prayer addressed to the Great Mystery is an act of faith to reach beyond “what is impenetrable to us” and to call upon “the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty” knowing that we do not see the bigger picture, cannot comprehend the implication, ripple effects, of many actions.

I must disagree with our esteemed Mr. Einstein on his phrasing of the experience in the negative in the third sentence. I would say rather that one to whom this emotion is not a stranger, who can stand rapt in awe, is truly alive. May we reach out, for ourselves, and for the whole world, to the God of All that is this awe-some basis of our faith.

Blessings,
Catherine

Prayer Team



The FCCG Prayer Team’s focus for the month of February will be to spend 5 minutes a day in prayer thanking God for sending us those we love, and praying to find love for those we think we do not love.

JULIET Meeting



The Juliets will have a Valentine’s Day party on Friday, February 18th in the Friendship Room of the Ekstam building at the Holmstad from 1:00 - 3:00 PM. Everyone in the church is welcome and if you need transportation please call Ruth Marsh or Nancy Hannah.

What's Up With the Missions Board?

Diaper Collection – The Open Door Clinic has an ongoing need for diapers of all sizes. They have many clients with small children who cannot afford food for their tables, let alone diapers. They can be any brand and any size. Bring donations to the church and leave them at the entrance to the sanctuary and we will see that they get delivered. Thanks for your help! In addition, we continue to collect canned food for the Open Door Clinic's food pantry. Before we started our weekly collection, Open Door's pantry looked like this...



One half of one set of shelves had miscellaneous items on it, the balance was used for storage of office supplies.

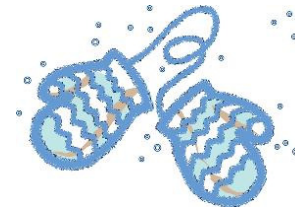
Now that we are supplying pantry foods every week, they have much to offer their clients. Their shelves look like this now...



Both sets of shelves full and ready to be distributed. They are very thankful for our help. Please continue to support this worthy mission by bringing in canned goods, dry soup mixes, peanut butter, diapers, and other non-spoilable items when you come to church on Sundays. You can also drop items off at the church office if you can't make it to church.

Open Door right now has a pressing need for some phone system work. We are hoping to be able to supply them with both some funds for the work and some labor as well. If you know of

anyone who might be interested in donating some time to help them with this project, please see Carolyn Fabian.



Hats & Mittens on Sale – Now that winter is mid-sentence, many of the stores are starting to put their hats, scarves and mittens on sale (or will be shortly), to make room for the resort wear that everyone so desperately needs... in February. Now would be a good time to stock up on those items for next year's Hat, Scarf and Mitten drive for Cameron School and the Open Door Clinics. Feel free to bring them in anytime, we have room to store them and you will be ahead for next fall!

Did You Know? – There are only four Global Missions Churches in the state of Illinois? They are: Epiphany United Church of Christ, Chicago, Illinois; Trinity United Church of Christ, Chicago, Illinois; First Congregational Church of Glen Ellyn, Glen Ellyn, Illinois, and.....

First Congregational Church of Geneva !!

A great group to be part of...the Missions Board thanks you for all your support.

Valentine's Day at Cameron School – we will be using the proceeds from the sale of some donated items to cover the cost of the Cameron School Valentine's Day party we throw for the kids every year. As with last year we will be providing a fruit basket, a craft project and a few little treats to make their day special, and to let them know that there are lots of people who love them. Throughout the year we support Sarah Anderson's second grade class at Cameron School. Sarah is a member of St. John's UCC Church in Chicago (our sister church), and a teacher at one of the schools in the neighborhood. Most everything she needs for her classroom or her students must be supplied by her, the teachers receive no budget for supplies. Thanks for all the support you give her class throughout the year. Our next fundraiser for the class will be for books for summer reading, which we will hold in April.

Refugee Ministry Operations – We continue to collect items for our refugee ministry Welcome Kit program. We are on the verge of delivering a second welcome kit to Exodus World Services in the next week. A list of the items needed for the welcome kit is available on the church website, www.geneva-ucc.org, or from any of the Missions Board members. If you have items you would like to donate but can't get them to church, please contact Kim Valentine or Lynnly Buchanan to make arrangements to have them picked up.

Rummage Sale – The Missions Board will be sponsoring a couple smaller scale rummage sales in 2011. The First will be the first Saturday in April, and will be held at Kim Valentine's house in Geneva. The second will be the First Saturday in May, and will be held in the front lawn of Kim's office building in Batavia. If you have items you would like to donate to one of these sales, let us know. We will not be collecting items prior to the sale as we did last year. You can bring your items to Kim's house or office building (address information to following March's newsletter) on the morning of the sale.

Lazarus House Dinner Service – Thank you to everyone who helped with the Lazarus House dinner service on Saturday, January 29th. Our next service date is Saturday, April 30th.



MEN'S BREAKFAST

The men's group, Society of the Sons of God (SoSoGo), will have their next breakfast meeting on Saturday, February 19th, at 8:30am in Fellowship Hall. All men and boys are welcome. The group meets on the third Saturday of each month for breakfast and light chores.



Our annual Chili Cook-off will be held on Sunday, March 6th following church services. As in prior years each board, and any members who wish to participate individually, will present a version of chili to the congregation for judging. The winner will be determined by popular vote. There is no need to notify anyone if you would like to submit a chili for judging. Just show up on the 6th with some chili and we'll make room for you at the table. The Boards will also provide chili fixin's, cornbread, beverages and desserts. Be there or be square. Some like to prepare for the annual chili cook-off with fasting the day before, but that's up to you.

The fee for entrance into the Annual Chili Cook-off will be one canned item per person for the food pantry bin... two if you're feeling really excited about chili.



We are trying to update our e-mail address listing, so that we are better able to communicate with members. We have recently sent our several e-mail updates about events happening in and around the church in the next few weeks. If you didn't get any of those announcements via e-mail, there's a pretty good chance we do not have a good e-mail address for you. If you are interested in getting these updates and other bits of information, please send the church an e-mail so that we have your address. It makes communications with members faster, more efficient, and more economical too!

Chicago Theological Seminary will be offering a Lenten Workshop on Immigration and Biblical Scripture on Wednesday, February 16th, from 9am to 3pm at the First Congregational Church in Naperville. The cost of the workshop is \$40, and you can find more information at:


<http://www.ctschicago.edu/index.php/mnualumns/lenten-workshop>

From the Deacons Board

The Deacons Board is interested in your thoughts. We are beginning to put our new shepherd system into effect. As mentioned we will be contacting members to see if there's anything their church could be doing for them. In addition, if there's anything you would like to see the church doing, any bible studies you'd like to see presented, any additional pot luck's or movies in the movie series; any book discussions, etc. Please drop the church a letter or an e-mail, or tell your shepherd when you are contacted.



Happy Valentine's Day !



A LOVE LETTER

In the New Testament, John writes a letter about God's love and the love we should show to other people.

DIRECTIONS: Working from left to right, write down all the 1's in the word blanks. Continue with the 2's and finally the 3's. Then read about love, from 1 John 4:11-12, NIV.

lives 3	in 3	us 3	Since 1	and 3	God 1	so 1	loved 1	his 3
us 1	love 3	we 1	if 2	also 1	is 3	made 3	we 2	ought 1
to 1	love 2	love 1	one 1	complete 3	one 2	another 1	in 3	us 3
another 2	God 2							

1 John 4:11-12, NIV

Answers: Since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. If we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.