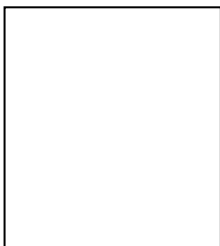


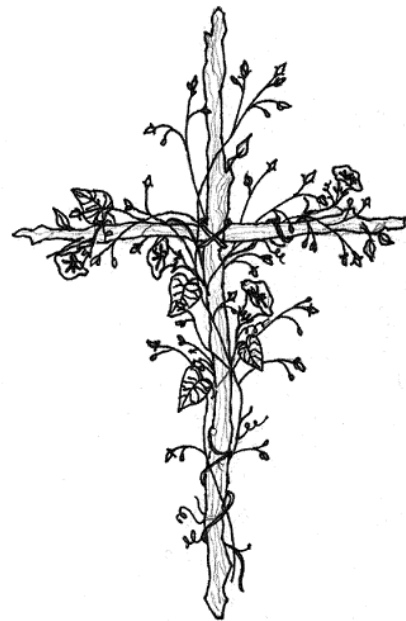
Congregational News
First Congregational Church of Geneva
United Church of Christ
321 Hamilton St.
Geneva, Illinois 60134

March 2011

Return Service Requested



Congregational News



Growing in the
Spirit,
Come Grow With
Us!

March 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**

Rain Music

By Joseph Seamon Cotter, Jr.

ON the dusty earth-drum
Beats the falling rain;
Now a whispered murmur,
Now a louder strain.

Slender, silvery drumsticks,
On an ancient drum,
Beat the mellow music
Bidding life to come.

Chords of earth awakened,
Notes of greening spring,
Rise and fall triumphant
Over everything.

Slender, silvery drumsticks
Beat the long tattoo--
God, the Great Musician,
Calling life anew.





Sunday Schedule

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

Board Meetings & Events

Sunday, Mar 6	10:00 am	Communion Sunday One Great Hour of Sharing starts
	11:30 am	ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF
Wed, Mar 9	7:30 pm	Ash Wednesday Services
Sun, Mar 13	11:30 am	Deacons Board Meeting
Sat, Mar 19	8:30 am	Men's Breakfast
Fri, Mar 25	6:30 pm	Justice Series Movie #1
Sun, Mar 27	11:15 am	OGHS Pie Throw
	11:30 am	Council Meeting
Sun, Apr 3	10:00 am	Holy Communion
	11:30 am	Missions Board Meeting
	3:00 pm	Catherine Erwin Ordination McHenry, IL

Birthdays !

3/8	Evan F
3/11	Laura F
3/16	David G
3/21	Rose H
3/30	Scott B

Anniversaries !

No March Anniversaries...call the church office if we're missing yours!

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

Additionally, please remember our ill and home-bound members: Emma Gene B, Betty D, Nell G, Elsie H, Leona J, Barb K, Lucille Landberg, and Esther W. Finally, please pray for those serving in the military.

For the Record...

Pulpit Associate volunteers for the coming months:



March	Barb M and Louise B
April	Open
May	Open

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

Food For Thought...

"We are always on the anvil; by trials God is shaping us for higher things."

Henry Ward Beecher

From The Pastor

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior!

The girls and I just returned from our very first ski vacation at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. I have to admit that the nitty-gritty of skiing was a bit more labor intensive than I realized it would be. First there was the question of the equipment. The girls, of course, are not quite equal to carrying skis and poles and boots, so back and forth I lugged them to the benches where the girls were sitting. After I got us all suited up, Gao's boots were too tight and Avi had to go to the bathroom. During my struggles a woman looking on remarked, "You're out of your mind with all those kids." I was hard put to contrive a rejoinder.

Next there was the question of skiing itself. I discovered to my dismay that skis are extremely awkward apparatuses. May kept crossing hers, which rendered her immobile and in need of rescue, and Avi kept pushing the button to release the skis from her boots because she couldn't walk. After an hour's lesson and another hour's practice on the bunny hill, we were ready for our first run. The lift operator seemed impatient that he had to stop the lift half a dozen times or so to get us up the hill. My explanation that we were beginners cut no ice with him. Finally we made it, poised for our first run.

Whoever invented the phrase, "beginner's luck" is, as Scripture puts it, "a liar and the father of lies." Gao lost the course entirely and fell down a ditch, and May and I tumbled down the hill in an intertwined somersault. Avi remained standing, but burst into tears, thinking we were all dead. Wouldn't you know it, that same woman happened by just at that moment. "How are you feeling now?" she smirked. This time I had a rejoinder. "I'm feeling blessed." "I'm not sure what your definition of blessing is, but it isn't mine," she retorted.

I am fairly sure of my definition of blessing, because I take it from the Bible. Blessing is the feeling that results from acting in

accord with God's truth. It's hard to describe the feeling, because it's unworldly, but it's unmistakable. And it's the most profound and satisfying feeling there is. "Remember the immigrant and the orphan." Give me a million more runs just like that one, and I'll still feel blessed.

Lent is the perfect season to act in accord with God's truth and so know the feeling of blessing. To outsiders, it may look like anything from sacrifice to stupidity. But those who feel it have the best thing the world has to offer – God's truth in Jesus Christ. In all things, Christians can rejoice.

In fellowship with you and with Him,

Becca

From The Moderator

What a happy month for me! Aside from the breaking weather and the sunnier days, Becca has left me very little space to converse with you this month. Since I've only space for a short update let me just say what a great opportunity we've created for the men in our congregation via the Men's Group, SoSoGo (Society of the Sons of God). Our meetings have really taken off since we started them about 6 months ago, and we have had some great discussions (and breakfasts). We typically have 10 to 15 or more folks, and accomplish a few chores around the church after we eat and chat. We have recently discussed potentially adding speakers, more purposeful discussion topics, and outside the church service projects. I'm really glad to be a part of this growing group and look forward to all the different directions we can go in the future...the sky's the limit. Think about joining us, the third Saturday of the month, 8:30am, bring an appetite.

See you there,

Dave



The Blue

You can have Egypt and Nantucket.

The only place I want to visit is The Blue,
not the Wild Blue Yonder that seduces pilots,
but that zone where the unexpected dwells,
waiting to come out of it in the shape of bolts.

I want to walk its azure perimeter
where the unanticipated is coiled, on the mark,
ready to spring into the predictable homes of earth.

I want to stroll through the pale indigo light
examining all the accidents about to rocket into time,
all the forgotten names about to fly from tongues.

I will scrutinize all the surprises of the future
and watch the brainstormings gathering darkly,
ready to hit the heads of inventors
laboring in their crackpot shacks.

A jaded traveler with an invisible passport,
I am at home with this heaven of the unforeseen,
waiting for the next whoosh of sudden departure
when, with no advance warning, to tiny augery,
the unpredictable plummets into our lives
from somewhere that looks like sky.

~ Billy Collins ~
(The Apple That Astonished Paris)

I was looking for something contemplative, something that spoke of the inner, soul work, if you will, that is the intended focus of Lent. I was looking for something, well, ethereal. This piece is what was speaking to me, kept drawing my attention, so ... as I

really do try to follow the possible leadings of the Spirit, what message is here for me, for us for this season of Lent?

Perhaps firstly that the ideal concept of Lent and the reality of home, school, and work that structure most of our lives requires that we have to be intentional, and really work to wedge in even some of the components of a more traditional picture of Lent. Like this azure blue zone of Mr. Collins thoughts, that traditional picture may exist only in our minds, much like a perfect Christmas, or a warm, sunny Easter morning in the Midwest! I think this image of The Blue is also a good reminder of why we need to do our best to work in some of the substance, if not the form, of a traditional understanding of Lent.

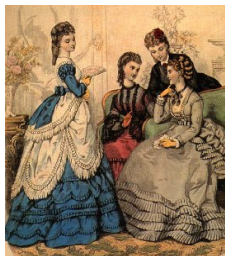
Life is often complicated and chaotic, not necessarily bad, but complex. And yet life is simple – we need to get up every day and face whatever comes from all the wonderful variables out there over which we have no control. What we can control is, well, us. Like an athlete who cannot expect to finish the race, let alone win it, without taking the time to train and prepare, we too as human beings, as Christians, need to take the time to prepare for the race of life. We need to spend time in scripture, time in personal faith practices, prayer, meditation, and time together with the community, the Body of Christ.

Jesus' first act as an intentional "minister" was to gather a community around himself - one to share his journey with, to spend time in prayer, in scripture, and yes, in fellowship with. Following Christ's example for a Godly life, may you find a renewed sense of God's love, God's presence in Christ, in your life this Lent.

Blessings,
Catherine



JULIET Meeting



The Juliets will meet on Friday, March 18th at Ruth Marsh's house, 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?

Canned Food and 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. Try to bring one in with you each week when you come to church!

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 one will be the first Saturday in April (4/2/11), and will be held at Kim Valentine's house in Geneva from 8am until 3pm. The second

will be the First Saturday in May (5/7/11), and will be held in the front lawn of Kim's office building in Batavia from 8am until 3pm. 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 on the morning of the sale.



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.

Chili Cook-off...Yea!



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!



From the Deacons Board



BOARD of DEACONS

hospitality to visitors, and inclusion and orientation of new members."

Your Deacons Board is moving forward. We finalized our by-laws as follows: "The Deacons Board shall devote itself to the nurture and spiritual growth of the membership. It shall provide opportunities for faithful fellowship, mutual service and concern, membership growth,

Now we are working on establishing goals for the year. As a part of the process we'd love to hear from you. "How may we better serve you in our responsibility to further enhance your spiritual experience?" We'd appreciate your in-put. A questionnaire is included in this newsletter which asks specifics about that very question. Please return your questionnaire before Palm Sunday, April 17, and thanks for your input!

Saturday March 26th 7:30-9:30 pm
Eastside Community Center
14 North Van Buren, Batavia

Earth Hour 2011

Take part of a Global event, Locally!
Free, Fun Family Event

*Turn Off Your Lights.
Turn On to the Stars.*

Come Play in the Dark, Batavia!

Batavia Environmental Commission, in cooperation with the Batavia Park District, presents:

- ☆ A Drum Circle
- ☆ Fox Valley Astronomical Society
- ☆ Candle-Light Yoga with Kathy Freedlund
- ☆ Guided Relaxation by Pam O'Brien, Greenleaf Yoga
- ☆ Story Telling by Four Winds Waldorf School

For more information: Locally: www.cityofbatavia.net/environmental Globally: <http://www.earthhour.org>

Learn to Meditate

On Monday, March 14th, 6:30 pm, Laura F will offer a one hour introductory meditation class in the Mayflower Room to those members interested in exploring the practices of meditation. Sharon J will assist with an introduction to "Spiritual Practices for Lent." Wear comfortable clothing and bring a mat or pillow.

Enhancing your worship experience...

We are three months into the New Year and there are still opportunities to check out any of our church committees to see if one would be a good fit for your expertise! In the past, if you have resisted the temptation to make a commitment to join a committee, this is just a reminder that you are always welcome to drop in and offer to help out any board that you find interesting. It is not necessary to be assigned to a committee in order to be involved in it. There are several to choose from; Christian Education, Deacons, Missions, Properties, Stewardship or the Worship Board. Every member of our congregation is welcome to pop in on any board meetings to see what is really going on “behind the scenes”.

For example, have you ever wondered what the Worship Board does? Are you bursting to give us decorating advice; like, how about changing those candles in the windows? or, what other types of décor can be put up on that altar? or, why can't we bring in more live bands?, or, why doesn't the choir wear colorful robes?, or, why aren't there more live plants in the sanctuary, or...something!!

Are you thinking that you have some exceptional ideas about “all things church related” but feel like you have nowhere to go with this information? Well, now you do... come and see what Worship Board is all about and find out more about those mysterious things that our committee does to “enhance your worship experience”, and then you too can be involved in the inner workings of your church home, and feel really good about it!

Our committee meetings are usually announced at the beginning of the worship service, so next time Worship Board announces a meeting, don't wait for an invitation, just grab some coffee, and follow one of our members (Barbara, Louise, Lynnly, Ruth, Dan or Sue) and check us out!

The 2011 Justice Series



For the fourth year in a row, we will present a Justice Movie Series, monthly beginning on Friday, March 25th and continuing through Friday, July 1st. The series features movies with a social justice theme. All movies start at 7:30pm, with cartoons, snacks and fellowship time

beforehand starting at 6:30pm. Admission is one canned good item for the Open Door Clinic Food Pantry per person. Free nursery care is available. Here's a little more information about this year's movies:

Friday, March 25th 7:30pm **The End of Poverty**

A daring, thought-provoking and very timely documentary by award winning filmmaker Philippe Diaz, exploring the idea that poverty is not accidental. It began with military conquest, slavery and colonization. Today, global poverty has reached new levels because of unfair debt, trade and tax policies - in other words, wealthy countries are exploiting the weaknesses of poor, developing countries.

Friday, April 29th 7:30pm **The Yes Men Fix the World**

A wickedly funny skewering of corporate greed, The Yes Men Fix the World is the true story of two mischief-makers who pose as the representatives of aompanies who have exhibited tremendous greed. In this wonderfully therapeutic film, Yes Men Andy Bichlbaum and Mike Bonanno impose cosmic justice by any means necessary. The Yes Men shines with a raw wit and originality as it follows the twisted logic of corporate capitalism to its crazy conclusion, exposing the hilarious and awful absurdities of the economic system that ruthlessly rules our planet.

Friday, May 27th 7:30pm
One Peace at a Time

Activist Turk Pipkin continues his global journey of knowledge in action with a goal to create a virtual roadmap to a better future by focusing on specific solutions in these troubled times. Pipkin journeys around the planet in search of a better world.

Friday, July 1st 7:30pm
As We Forgive

Could you forgive a person who murdered your family? This is the question faced by the subjects of As We Forgive, a documentary about Rosaria and Chantale, two Rowandan women coming face-to-face with the men who slaughtered their families during the 1994 Rowandan genocide. Struggling to live again as neighbors, these survivors and killers discover the power and the pain of radical reconciliation.

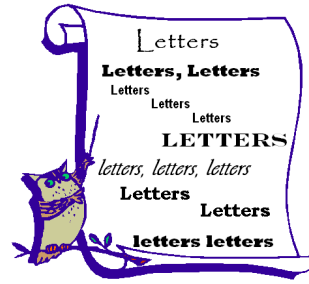
This is going to be a great series, not to be missed. Bring your friends and add some meat to your normal coffee hour conversations.

Upcoming Lenten and Easter Services



Ash Wednesday services will be held at 7:30pm on Wednesday, March 9th. The sanctuary will be available after the service for silent meditation if you wish to stay.

Good Friday services at 7:30pm on Friday, April 22nd. As with our Ash Wednesday service, the sanctuary will remain open after church for any who wish to have some silent meditation time.



Letters, we get letters, we get lots and lots of letters...

February 24, 2011

Hello Becca and Congregation,
Thank you for inviting us to share our impressions of Palestine and Israel after our three months' stay last summer. Your hospitality was warm and welcoming!!! We especially felt we were at worship with the mood and flow of the service. Your gift of the stained glass hanging was unexpected and very thoughtful!!!! (stained glass is one of my favorite mediums.)

Blessings on your ministry,
Faye Buttrick

February 14, 2011

Dear Pastor Becca and members of your church,
It is with great appreciation that we continue to receive your most generous financial support of our ministry work here at St. John UCC, as well as the Aldi gift cards. You are truly a blessing to us in so many ways.

As you know, our food pantry is now serving more than 1100 people each month. In addition to our food pantry and our monthly rummage sales, we are a church home to 300 recovering addicts in addition to our regular worshipping congregation on Sunday mornings. What a wonderful joy this is for all of us! We have now started a monthly Sunday evening fellowship meal for the homeless in the neighborhood. You truly are a blessing to all we do. Thank you.

Rev. Charlotte Nold and Congregation

