

FROM THE PASTOR

In an old "Family Circle" cartoon, the children are watching television and a salesman is saying, "Let's make this the best Christmas ever." The next frame shows the children, all with a picture of the traditional manger scene in their minds, while Dolly says, "Better than the First one???"

Many of us do our part to boost the economy and to keep the local stores healthy with our Christmas shopping, but there is no way that any Christmas, no matter how wonderful, could ever top the first one.

We celebrate Christmas as the birthday of Jesus, and we shall continue to do so even though scholars tell us there is no way we can know the exact date of Jesus' birth. It is thought that December 25 was chosen as the date of Christ's birth to take the minds of the early Christians away from the secular and pagan celebrations of the time.

The Roman world celebrated the Saturnalia. All businesses were closed except those that provided food or revelry. Gambling, drinking and feasting were encouraged. People exchanged gifts.

December 25 came to be celebrated as the festival of Dies Invicti Solis, the Day of the Invincible Sun. It was a time of the winter solstice, when the days begin to lengthen again. It was a time of great festivity to celebrate the journey from darkness to light in the world of nature.

Early Christians were familiar with the symbolic identification of Christ with the Sun. Malachi 4:2 reads: "But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings." It was easy to replace the invincible sun with the new Son of Righteousness.

Today it seems as if we have come full circle. Like those early Christians, we are facing today a world more interested in drinking and partying, buying and getting, than in celebrating the birth of our Lord. And we wonder, what can we do about it? What we can do is to do what those early Christians did and make sure that we do everything possible to focus on the birth of Christ. Think how you can make

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Marshall's Office Hours...

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 1-4pm; Wednesdays Noon-2pm

You may also feel free to contact him anytime at 772/340-0472. Please call before stopping by church in case he is out calling on people.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

...for
January

1st	Ken Noone	21st	Bob Sternal
8th	Dick Magown	22nd	Bob Bater
11th	Darlene King	24th	Leone Bater

and ANNIVERSARIES —
26thCharlie and Dot Basdekis



Sunday, January 17th...

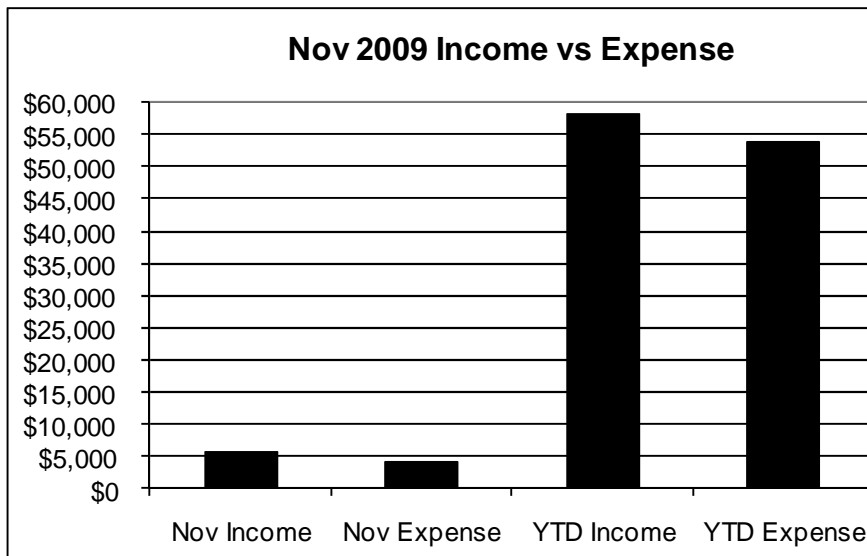
I need your help and input to make this newsletter happen so please send/drop-off your articles. As usual, articles can be dropped in the Treasurer's mailbox at church, e-mailed to candc@webbplace.com, or faxed to (561)348-9909.

Upcoming Dates...

- CHRISTMAS EVE—Thurs., Dec. 24th 7pm
- WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP—Mon., Jan. 4th at Noon
- HAM & BEAN SUPPER—Sat., Jan. 16th at 6pm
- 25th ANNIVERSARY DINNER—Sat., Jan. 30th
- CROP WALK—Sunday, Feb. 28th
- CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING—Sunday, Mar. 14th

Treasurer's Report...

November was a good month for the church, ending \$1,330.00 in the black. Advance raffle ticket sales for the Holiday Bazaar and Enjoyment Book revenue helped out a lot. Year-to-date income thru November exceeds expenses by about \$4,200.00. As usual, all bills are current.



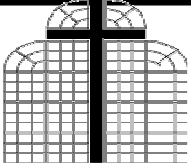
Fund transfers were not included in the numbers above. This is money gifted from Memorial and Designated Gifts funds and typically used for major purchases. These transfers increase the income over expense amounts to nearly \$7,300.00 (YTD).

Respectfully submitted,
Charles Webb, Treasurer

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Christmas more meaningful. Maybe it's taking time to read the Christmas story, or to meditate and listen to the carols. Maybe it's thinking how many of the Christmas decorations are symbols of the Christ child. Maybe it's sharing Christmas greetings through the cards you send. Maybe it means deciding how you can do something to help someone else. Maybe it's thinking of the love you have for those for whom you're buying gifts, just as the Christ child is the gift of God's love for us.

Just as the sun brings light to our world and our lives, may the Sun of Righteousness bring His light to your life. May you have a very Merry Christmas!
Dr. Marshall Cook



Prayer *List*

Sal Alibrio, Jim Allan, Richie Allen, Fred Aniello, Wanda Bartoy, Carol Brooks, Stephen Burke, Gail Cook, Ida Cram, Gertrude Dovey, Alex & Dee Ford, Ted Fowler, Jim Fritz, Family of Chet Gill, Jennifer Goldacker, Katharine Gordon, Jennifer Gray, Shirley Hage, Diane Harrison, Dennis Hower, Pastor David Huels, Debbie Knapp, Ruth Livingston, Diane MacWilliam, Dick Magown, Diane Millard, Chuck St. John, Kathy Schaaf, Carol Strunk, and Lillian Williams

NOTE: If any names contained here should be removed, or new ones added, please see one of our Deacons.

First Congregational Church of Ft. Pierce

(772) 465-2082 3601 Kirby Loop Road, Ft. Pierce, FL 34981

Pastor: Marshall Cook (772/340-0472); **Organist:** Janis Gonzales

Church Officers & Leaders—**Moderator:** Diane MacWilliam; **Vice Moderator:** Tom Maybury; **Clerk:** Carol Sinotte; **Treasurer:** Charlie Webb; **Asst. Treasurer:** Kim Sinotte; **Financial Secretary:** Diane MacWilliam; **Member-at-Large:** Bob Bater

Board & Committee Chairs—Trustees, **Don Locke**; Property, **John Souza**; Christian Education, **Becky Miller**; Deacons, **Tom Maybury**; Memorial, **Joyce Maybury**; Missions, **Audrey Magown**; Music, **Gerry Brown**; Nominating, **Diana Junker**; Auditors, **Bob Bater, Don Rogers**; Evangelism, **Cyndy Webb**; Women's Fellowship, **Carolyn Rogers**.

Please plan to join us for the Christmas Eve Candlelight service—and bring a friend along to celebrate Christ's birth with the singing of carols, hearing the Christmas story and the lighting of individual candles.



Christmas Eve Service at 7:00 pm

Please join us. If you need transportation please don't hesitate to call the church or inform one of the Deacons or Rev. Cook. Egnog reception following.

Member news...

Don Rogers was at Lawnwood Hospital last week, but now home and back to church last Sunday.

Dewey Showalter had a heart attack on Nov. 29th but, in Carol's words, "Praise God we got him to the hospital in time. The specialist put in a stent for blockage in the one area." He is home and doing well, just the time of recovery. They plan to arrive in Ft. Pierce some time Dec. 28th.

Our sympathy to the family of **Jinna Scheiwe** who passed away on Nov. 21st. Jinna and her late husband Ken lived in Fort Pierce since 1975. She was a graduate of Western Michigan University and a kindergarten teacher; a member of the Fort Pierce Women's Club and American Association of University Women. Memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer society, P.O. Box 22718, Oklahoma City, OK 73123-1718 .



New Addresses for your directory:

Audrey Studholme...

38 Lyndon Ln, New Windsor, NY 12553

Katharine Gordon...

250 Oak Hammock Circle SW, Vero Beach, FL 32962

Thoughts for the Christmas Season...

Live deep...

Never stop learning, playing,
or finding wonder in the world around you
Live the length of your life but live the depth of it as well.

Travel light...

There is no use in carrying around
worry and regret; they only weigh you down
Always keep yourself open to hope and to love.
They give us wings.

Forgive imperfections...

In yourself and others.
Imperfections keep things interesting.
They're the cracks where the light shines through.

Own beautiful things...

And not just to keep in the drawer,
tucked away for a perfect day.
Surround yourself with things that make you happy,
that reminds you of the beauty all around us
if we only keep our eyes open to it.

Make mistakes...

Follow detours.
Sometimes it takes an unexpected turn
to help us find the life that is waiting for us around the
bend. Trust yourself and the path that is meant for you.

Take care of yourself...

And sometimes that means
you need the ice cream.
Be good to your body, but also to your mind and spirit.
You're the only one that can.

And always, always know you are loved...

You are a gift to this world
and a blessing to us.
And that will never change.

Tom and Joyce Maybury





Annual HOLIDAY BAZAAR

The bazaar was a great blessing this year, our total raised was \$2,200...and still counting! The big raffle took in over \$900, and most tables were up from last year. The winners of the big raffle were:

- **Mary Sternel**-- Needle point "Welcome"
 - **Ben Gray** Footprints
 - **Bonnie Townley**, picnic set
 - **Carol Sinotte**, Cabinet
 - **Judy Amitrano**, Wreath

The Silent Auction Winners were: **Tom Maybury**, scotch gift set; **Carol Sinotte**, bath set; **Janis Gonzales**, stone wash bath set, **Carol Sinotte**, lighted village; **Pat Smith**, antique picture; **Diana Junker**, caroler figure; **Carol Sinotte**, cake holder; **Tom Maybury**, candy basket; **Tom Maybury**, wine basket; **Carolyn Rogers**, mirror.

A huge thank-you to everyone that took part in the event. It would not have happened without you.

Blessings for the New Year, **Diana Junker**



Enjoyment Books...

Now on sale...be sure and get yours today! Only \$35 again this year with loads of 2-for-1 coupons. \$10 from every book sold comes back to the church.

We have sold 42 books thus far. Coupons are good now through Oct. 31st 2010. And what better money saver for the person looking to stretch their entertainment dollars, or perfect gift for someone this holiday season!

This is a great fund raiser for us, so please, if you know someone in your neighborhood or community who would enjoy a book—why not sell them one! So, we have plenty of books on hand and will be very happy to sell them!! If you are not back to Florida yet and would like one set aside for you, please let Cyndy or Charlie Webb know.



Mission Efforts have many looks...

- **Christmas Fund Offering:** As Advent approaches, UCC congregations get ready for the Christmas Fund Special Offering. Administered by the Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ, your gifts provide supplemental pension and health benefits to low-income retirees who have served the church, emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay employees, and Christmas gift checks to hundreds of annuitants. Your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low-income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. A special envelope is enclosed for the offering. We will receive our Christmas Fund offering on Sunday, December 20, or whenever you choose to bring it.
- **Christmas Giving:** Hazel From the *Image of Christ* stopped in to ask us if we would bring toys for children this year rather than adopting one family. We will be able to reach more children this way. She is expecting over 500 children at their Christmas party this year. The ages will run from 2-years to 12-years. A box will be placed at the entrance doors. Wrap with a tag denoting for a boy or a girl, and appropriate ages. Unwrapped gifts are fine too.
- **Food Pantry:** There is always a container sitting right by the inside of the front door of the church...waiting and ready to be filled with non-perishable food and toiletry items. These are delivered to a local ministry "In The Image of Christ". Whatever you can spare is most appreciated by many!
- Bring in your "**Box Tops**" and "**Labels**" for Education". There is a bin and container located by the front door for your convenience.
 - **Bring refreshments** for after-church fellowship.
- **Be a Lay Reader, Usher or Greeter:** When you return this winter, perhaps you will consider helping to spell our "year-rounders" who have served all summer long. Currently we are looking for participants for the Advent Wreath litany. We need a family or couple of people each Sunday during Advent to read and light the candles.
- **Join the Crafty Ladies:** Come at noon on Wednesdays or make something at home.
- Plan to be a part of **CROP Walk** next February 28th. Set aside the date to walk, or plan to pledge your support to one of our walkers. You can also make a pledge online at: www.churchworldservice.org.

From the
Moderator



We are thankful for...

Christmas always follows Thanksgiving. As we prepare for Christmas we should still be in the thankful mode, for aren't we the recipients of the greatest gift ever given – the birth of Jesus Christ!

Another gift that we all have is our little church on Kirby Loop road and our wonderful church family. It takes each and every one of us to keep this church going whether it be financial support or giving of our time and talent. While still in this thankful mood, I would like to thank some of the people who contribute faithfully to the life of First Congregational UCC in Fort Pierce.

- **Dorothy Meads** for making the lovely flower arrangements that add beauty to our sanctuary each Sunday.
- **Julia Culbertson** who send cards to those who are sick, have birthdays and sometimes just to say *"Your church family is thinking of you."*
- **Cyndy Webb** who prepares our newsletter each month.
- **Carol Sinotte** for keeping our mailing and phone lists up to date.
- **John Souza** who greets and seats people each Sunday.
- **Leone Bater, Sandra Cohen & Sandra Starkey** for teaching Ben and Charlotte in Sunday School.
- **Ben and Charlotte Gray** who serve as acolytes.
- **Peggy Goldacker, Elsa Millard, & Diana Junker** for spelling each other preparing the weekly bulletin.
- **Peggy Goldacker** for maintaining our library.
- **The Sunday Morning Bakers** for all those goodies we enjoy at coffee hour.

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Christmas Cantata...

A Joyful Nowell, a collection of Bible Verses and Anthems recounting the Christmas story, was presented as part of the service on Sunday, Dec. 13th.

This original program was compiled by our new Music Director, Jan Gonzales. This was a beautiful telling of Christ's birth interweaving Bible passages with music to tell the story. Readings were done by **Becky Miller & David Holtje**; duet by **Diane MacWilliam & Kim Sinotte**; and a solos by **David Holtje & Cyndy Webb**.

We would like to say a special thanks to **Julie Gagliardo**, flautist, and **Eleanor Foisy**, guest soprano for joining us in this special presentation.

Christian Education...

Jesus loves all the children and so do we. Our Sunday school children have been busy in their class the past few months. A BIG thanks to all who have helped in the Sunday School. Perhaps, there is someone else who would like to help out "even 1 Sunday a month". If that someone is you, please speak to anyone on the Christian Ed board. Thank you for considering this opportunity to serve our children.

Becky Miller, Chair



Help...We need help...

The newsletter is a valuable ministry that's in need of helping hands to copy, compile, fold and prepare for mailing/distribution. It's not hard work, but people do need to be available year-round to do this. The work can easily be shared, and we need some volunteers to step up to help.

If we do not get help for this, then the church will have to begin to pay a local printer for this work, and we'd like to keep this in-house.

If you are willing to lend a hand, please contact Cyndy Webb for further details.



Join the
**Newsletter
Team!**

25th Anniversary Celebration...

As you read in last month's newsletter, we are preparing to celebrate our church's 25th anniversary. We have set the date for a dinner party at the church on Saturday, Jan. 30, 2010. This is a few months later than the actual anniversary but we wanted to have the celebration when most of you could attend. We will have a catered meal and entertainment to follow.

It is our hope that each and every one of you will be able to attend. We will have volunteers pick up those who are unable to drive at night. Invitations are being sent to charter members who no longer live in the area and it is hoped they will be able to attend. Charter members who are still with us will be asked if they would like to share any stories of the "old days".

Mark the date on your calendar now. Watch and listen for further details. **The Anniversary Committee**

Women's Fellowship...

We hosted a Christmas Potluck Dinner on December 12th. As usual there was a variety of delicious dishes. Several Christmas-related games were played, songs sung and fellowship enjoyed. Pastor Cook gave a brief Christmas story and introduced



our guest Hazel, from *In the Image of Christ*. On behalf of the organization, she accepted gifts for children furnished by those who attended.

The next meeting will be January 4th noon. Let's start the New Year with a good attendance; please join us!

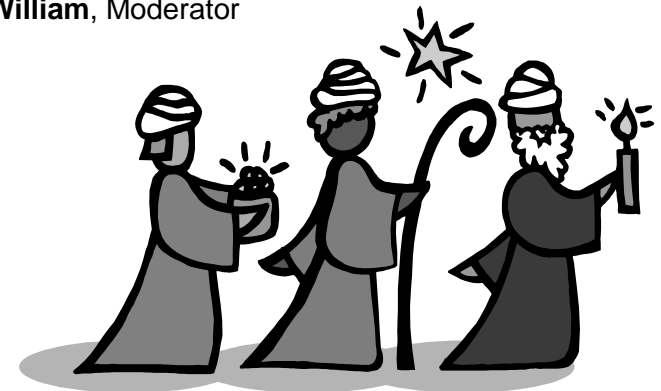
Carolyn Rogers, President

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- **Dick Sinotte** for preparing the coffee for the above.
- **Steve Sabecki** who makes sure our hymns and attendance are posted each week.
- **Chancel Choir** for raising their voices to give God glory.
- **Greeters** for making people feel welcome as they come through our doors.
- **The Crafty Ladies** who spend so much time all year long so our biggest fund raiser, The Christmas Bazaar, will be a success.
- **Our cooks and kitchen helpers** who provide us with breakfasts and dinners throughout the year.
- And, of course, I would be remiss if I forgot to mention our professional support, **Pastor Marshall Cook** and Music Director **Janis Gonzales**. Thank you for the fine work you do.

The danger of listing names is that you may forget someone. If I forgot someone, please forgive me and remember that it may take a village to raise a child" but it takes the whole congregation to raise a church, and that is what each and every one of you are doing. Thank you one and all and may each of you have a blessed Christmas.

Diane MacWilliam, Moderator



COUNCIL MEETING ~~ November 18, 2009

The November council meeting was opened with a prayer by Marshall. The agenda was accepted as printed.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Marshall made three hospital calls and seven home calls in the last month. He would like to decorate the church (Hanging of the Greens) at 1:00 on December 1. He will announce it at worship in the hopes we will have a good turnout of volunteers.

CLERK'S REPORT: The Clerk's report was accepted as printed.

TREASURER'S REPORT: There were no questions on Charlie's financial report. Rather than go into a lot of detail on insurance, and take up time at council, Charlie suggested that he meet with the Trustees and Moderator and anyone else who is interested sometime in January. This was acceptable to all.

DEACON'S REPORT: Tom submitted a written report stating that the poinsettias have been ordered from the Lion's Club. The Christmas Eve service will be held at 7:00 p.m. The Deacons will provide a supper in February. Tom was asked if there would be the usual eggnog party following the Christmas Eve service. It was suggested he put out a sign-up sheet for people to bring refreshments.

TRUSTEE'S REPORT: The trustees have not yet come up with a fee schedule for the rental of the various rooms at the church.

PROPERTY REPORT: Our well water won't be suitable for watering. A new well costs about \$1,000.00. Don doesn't think we need a new well for watering the plants. Tom said that there is a solution where a piece of equipment is attached to the sprinkler system to remove rust.

MUSIC COMMITTEE: Gerry said that the service on December 13 will be a cantata. Janet and the choir are working on special music for Advent.

STEWARDSHIP: No report

CHRISTIAN ED: Becky said that Sunday School classes are being held. We need more people who are willing to teach Sunday School.

MISSIONS: No report

MEMORIAL: Joyce said that there was nothing new to report.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP: Diana said that there was a meeting November 1 with a small turnout. There will be a Presidential Tea on December 7. Hazel from In The Image Of Christ is collecting toys for their Christmas party.

EVANGELISM: Cyndy said that we need more input for each newsletter. People appreciate receiving a newsletter to be informed of the different functions that are taking place. Diane has a flyer that she would like to put in all bags that will be given out at the Christmas Bazaar listing the different events that will be taking place. Tom thinks we should go out into the community to advertise our church. He has offered to do this.

NOMINATING: No report.

OLD BUSINESS: Tom said that ticket sales for the raffle are going well. Table chairpersons have been chosen. There will be a luncheon during the Bazaar. We need gifts for the silent auction items. The church's 25th anniversary will be held January 30. The council voted to have the suggested anniversary committee makes plans for the event. The committee will consist of David and Diann Holtje, Jack and Rusty Goodwin, Marshall and Gail Cook and Dick and Carol Sinotte.

NEW BUSINESS: Plans for Marshall's installation are underway.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Sinotte, Clerk